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A BRIEF INSTRUCTION IN THE WORSHIP of GOD, AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW-TESTAMENT,

BY WAY OF *QUESTION* and *ANSWER*:

With an *Explication* and *Confirmation* of those ANSWERS.

By *J. Owen*, D. D.

John 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures*, &c.

With Additions.

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A

Brief Instruction

IN

The Worſhip of God, &c.

Q. 1. *What doth God require of us in our dependance on him, that he may be glorified by us, and we accepted with him?*

Anſw. That we (a) Worſhip him (b) in and by the ways of his own appointment. (*a*) Matth. 4. 10. Rev. 14. 7. Deut. 6. 13. chap. 10. 20. (*b*) Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3. Exod. 24. 3. Gen. 18. 19. Joſh. 23. 6. 8. Zach. 14. 16.

Explication.

By the *Worſhip* of God enquired after, not that which is *natural* or *moral*, which

is required in the firſt Commandment is in-
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and conſcience unto him, as the great So
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Firſt, Becauſe it depends on the *Natur*
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it is his duty *to glorifie him as God*; that i
to believe in him, love him, truſt him, an
call upon him; which all are therefore *curſe*
that do not. *Pſal.* 79. 6. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8.

And, Secondly, Becauſe it was in the prin
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as that which ſuited, directed, and enable
him to anſwer the Law of his Creation, re
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glory. And this kind of *Worſhip*, though it depend not upon the *Nature of God*, but upon his free and arbitrary diſpoſal, and ſo was of old liable unto alterations; yet God did ever ſtrictly require in the ſeveral ſtates and conditions that his Church hath gone through in the world. And this is that which moſt commonly in the Scripture is called by the name of the *worſhip of God*; as that whereby all the acceptable actings of the ſouls of men towards him are expreſs'd, and the only way of owning and acknowledging him in the world, as alſo of entertaining a viſible intercourſe with him. This therefore he calls for, & requires indiſpenſibly of all that draw nigh to him, and that becauſe he is *the Lord our God*, *Rev.* 14.6,7. *Mat.* 4.10. *Deut.* 10. 12,13. For his obſervance hereof, doth he ſo approve of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18.19. and ſets it down as an everlaſting law unto all others, that in a holy obſervation thereof, *he will be ſanctified in all that draw nigh unto him. Lev.* 10. 1,2,3. His commands alſo concerning it are multiplied in the Scripture, with the approbation of all thoſe that attend unto them. We may not think to find acceptance with God, or to inherit the promiſes, if ſuppoſing our ſelves to adhere unto him in Worſhip *internal* and *natural*, we neglect that which is

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external, and of his free appointment: for besides, that we renounce thereby our inward dependance on him also, in not observing his commands, as *Adam* did in transgressing an *Institution*, we become wholly useless unto all the ends of his glory in the world, which is not the way to come to an enjoyment of him. Neither do we only express and profess our inward *moral natural worship* of God hereby, by which means it becomes the principal way and instrument of faith and trust, exerting themselves in our obedience; but also it is a most effectual *help* and assistance unto the principle of that natural worship, strengthening the *habit* of it, and *exciting* it unto all suitable *actings*, unto its encrease and growth

Qu. 2. *By what means do we come to know that God will thus be worshipped?*

Answ. That God is to be worshipped and that according to his own will and appointment, is a (a) principal branch of the Law of our Creation, written in our hearts; the (b) sense whereof is renewed in the second Commandment; but the ways and means of that worship depend meerly on God's (c) Sovereign Pleasure and Institution. (*a*) Rom. 1. 21. chap. 14, 1

14,15. Acts 15.16,17. Act.17.23,24,25,26, 27,28,29 *verſes.* (*b*) Exod.20.4,5,6. (*c*) Jer. 7.31. Exod.25.40. Heb. 3.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Joh. 1.18.

Explication.

Theſe two things all men ſaw by nature.

Firſt, That **God**, however they miſtook in their apprehenſions of him, would be and was to be worſhipped with ſome *outward ſolemn* Worſhip. So that although ſome are reported to have even caſt off all knowledge and ſenſe of a *Divine Being*, yet never any were heard of, that came to an acknowledgement of any God, true or falſe, but they all conſented, that he was conſtantly and ſolemnly to be worſhipped. And that not only by *individual Perſons*, but by *Societies* together, that ſo they might own and honour him whom they took for their God. And thus far outward Worſhip is required in the firſt Commandment; namely, that the inward be exerciſed and expreſſed. When we take God for our God, we take him to worſhip him, *Deut.*10.12, 13. Other thoughts, namely of *inward* Worſhip, without *outward* expreſſion at all, or any time, or in any way, are but a covert unto *Atheiſm*. And,

Secondly, This alſo they were led to an apprehenſion of, by the ſame light whereby they are a *Law unto themſelves*, Rom. 2. 14. that God would be worſhipped in the *way*, and by the *means* that he himſelf appointed and approved; whence none among the *Heathen* themſelves undertook to appoint ways and *Ceremonies* of Worſhip, but ſtill they pretended to derive the knowledge of them from the *Gods themſelves*, of whom they reckoned that every one would be worſhipped in his own way. And becauſe notwithſtanding this pretence, being left of God, and deluded of *Satan*, they did invent falſe and fooliſh ways of Worſhip, not only not appointed of God, but ſuch as were unſuited unto thoſe *inbred notions* which they had of his nature and excellencies, the Apoſtle convinces and diſproves them, as men acting againſt the *Light of nature*, and Principles of Reaſon, *Rom.* 1. 21. they might have ſeen, *that*, in their Idolatry they anſwered not their own inbred conceptions of the *Divine Power and Godhead*, ſo as to glorifie him as God. And in the like manner doth he argue at large, *Act.* 17. 23. But beyond this, the *inbred light of nature* could not conduct any of the Sons of men. This alone is contained in the firſt Precept. That God was

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to be worſhipped they knew, and that he was to be worſhipped by ways and means of his own appointment they knew; but what thoſe ways and means were, they knew not. Theſe always depended on Gods ſoveraign will and pleaſure, and he made them known to whom he pleaſed, *Pſal.*147.19,20. And although ſome of the ways which he doth appoint, may ſeem to have a great compliance in them unto the *light of nature*, yet in his worſhip he accepts them not on that account; but meerly on that of his own inſtitution. And this as he hath declared his will about in the ſecond Commandment; ſo he hath ſeverely forbidden the *addition* of our own inventions unto what he hath appointed: ſending us for inſtruction unto him alone, whom he hath endowed with *Soveraign Authority* to reveal his will, and ordain his worſhip, *John* 1. 18. *Mat.* 17 5. 1 *Chron.*16.13.

Qu.3. *How then are theſe ways and means of the Worſhip of God made known unto us?*

Anſw. In and by the written Word only; which contains a full & perfect Revelation of the Will of God, as to his whole Worſhip, and all the concernments of it: Joh. 5. 39. Iſa.8,20. Luk.16.19. 2 Tim.3.15,16,17.

1 Pet. 1. 19. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Joſh. 1. 7. Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 20. Iſa. 29. 13.

Explication.

The *End* wherefore God granted his Word unto the Church, was, that thereby it might be inſtructed in his mind and will, as to what concerns the worſhip and obedience that he requireth of us, and which is accepted with him. This the whole Scripture it ſelf every where declares and ſpeaks out unto all that do receive it; as 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. with the reſidue of the teſtimonies above recited, do declare. It ſuppoſeth, it declareth, that of our ſelves we are ignorant how God is, how he ought to be worſhipped, *Iſa.* 8. 20. Moreover it manifeſts him to be a jealous God, exerciſing that holy property of his nature in an eſpecial manner about his Worſhip, rejecting and deſpiſing every thing that is not according to his will, that is not of his Inſtitution, *Exod.* 20. 4, 5.

That we may know what is ſo, he hath made a Revelation of his mind and will in his *written Word*, that is, the *Scripture*. And to the end that we might expect inſtruction from thence alone in his Worſhip, and act therein accordingly.

Firſt,

Firſt, *He ſends us and directs us thereunto*, expreſly for that purpoſe, *Iſa.*8 28. *Luk.*16. 19. *Joh.*5.39. and not once intimates in the leaſt, any other way or means of inſtruction unto that end.

Secondly, He frequently affirms, that it is ſufficient, able, and perfect to guide us therein, 2 *Tim.*3.15,16,17. 1 *Pet.* 1.19. *Pſal.*19. 7,8,9. And whereas he hath expreſly given it unto us for that end, if there be any want or defect therein, it muſt ariſe from hence, that either God would not, or could not give unto us a perfect Revelation of his will; neither of which can be imagined.

Thirdly, He hath commanded us to obſerve all whatſoever he hath appointed therein, and not to make any addition thereunto, *Joſh.*1.7. *Deut.*4.2. *chap.*12.32. *Prov.* 30 6. *Rev.*22.20. And,

Fourthly, Peculiarly interdicted us the uſe of any ſuch things as are of the inſtitution or appointment of Men, *Iſa.*29.13,14. So that from the Scriptures alone, are we to learn what is accepted with God in his worſhip.

Qu.4. *Have theſe Ways and means been always the ſame from the beginning?*

Anſw. No! But God hath altered and changed them at ſundry ſeaſons, according

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to the counsel of his own will, so as he saw necessary for his own Glory, and the Edification of his Church. See Gen. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 17. 10, 11. Exod. 12. 3, 4, 5. Exod. 20. Chap. 25. 9. Heb. 1. 1. Heb. 9. 10, 11, 12.

Explication.

The *external* Worship whereof we speak, being as was shewed before, not *natural* or moral, arising necessarily from the dependance of the rational Creature on God, as its first Cause, chiefest Good, last End, and Soveraign Lord, but proceeding from the meer will and pleasure of God, determining how he will be honoured and glorified in the world, was always *alterable* by him, by whom it was appointed. And whereas ever since the entrance of sin into the World, God had always respect unto the promise of the Lord Christ, and his mediation, in whom alone he will be glorified, and faith in whom he aimed to begin and increase in all his Worship, he hath suited his Institutions of the means thereof, to that dispensation of Light and Knowledge of him, which he was pleased at any time to grant. Thus immediately after the giving of the *Promise*, he appointed *Sacrifices* for the great means of his

his Worſhip; as to glorifie himſelf expreſly by Mens offering unto him of the principal good things which he had given them, ſo to inſtruct them in the Faith, and confirm them in the Expectation of the *Great Sacrifice* for Sin, that was to be offered by the promiſed Seed, *Gen.*4.3,4. *Heb.*11.4. Theſe were the firſt inſtituted Worſhip of God in the world after the entrance of ſin. Hereunto he nextly added *Circumciſion*, as an expreſs ſign of the Covenant, with the grace of it, which he called *Abraham* and his Seed unto, by Jeſus Chriſt, *Gen.*17.10,11. And to the ſame general end and purpoſe, he afterwards ſuper-added the *Paſſeover* with its attendant inſtitutions, *Exod.*12.23.24. And then the whole Law of inſtitutions contained in Ordinances, by the Miniſtery of Angels on Mount *Sinai*, *Exod.*20. So by ſundry degrees he built up that fabrick of his *outward Worſhip*, which was ſuited in his infinite wiſdom unto his own glory, and the edification of his Church, until the exhibition of the promiſed Seed, or the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, and the accompliſhment of the work of his mediation, *Heb.*1.1. for unto that ſeaſon were thoſe Ordinances to ſerve, and no longer, *Heb* 9.10,11,12. And then were they removed by the ſame authority

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whereby they were inſtituted and appointed, *Col.*2.14,18,19,20. So that though God would never allow, that Men, upon what pretence ſoever, ſhould make any alteration in the Worſhip appointed by him, by adding unto it any thing of their own, or omitting ought that he had commanded, either in matter or manner, notwithſtanding that he knew that it was to abide but for a ſeaſon, but commanded all men ſtraitly to attend to the obſervation of it, whilſt it was by him continued in force, *Mal.*4.4. yet he always reſerved unto himſelf the ſoveraign Power of altering, changing, or utterly aboliſhing it at his own pleaſure: Which authority he exerted in the Goſpel as to all the meer inſtitutions of the Old Teſtament. Whilſt they continued, he enforced them with *moral* reaſons, as his own Holineſs and Authority; but thoſe reaſons prove not any of thoſe inſtitutions to be *moral*, unleſs they enſue upon thoſe reaſons alone, and are no where elſe commanded: for being once inſtituted and commanded, they are to be enforced with *moral* conſiderations, taken from the Nature of God, and our Duty, in reference unto his Authority. So, ſaith he, *Thou ſhalt reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord*, which no more proves that a *moral Duty*, than that

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enjoyned upon the same foundation, *Levit.* 11.44. *I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctifie your selves, & ye shall be holy, for I am holy, neither shal ye defile your selves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth.* Not defiling our selves with the touching or eating of creeping things, is now no moral Duty, since the institution is ceased, although it be enforced by many moral considerations.

Qu. 5. *Is there any farther alteration to be expected in or of those Institutions and Ordinances of Worship, which are revealed and appointed in the Gospel?*

Answ. No! The last compleat Revelation of the will of God being made by the Son, who is Lord of all, his Commands and Institutions are to be observed inviolably unto the end of the World, without alteration, diminution, or addition, Heb. 1.1. chap.10.25,26,27. Mat.28.20. 1 Cor. 11.26. 1 Tim.6.14.

Explication.

It was shewed before that all the Institutions of the Old Testament had respect unto the coming of Christ in the flesh, who was the

the *end of the Law*, *Rom.*10 4. and thereupon they were subject to *alteration* and *abolition* upon a twofold account.

First, Because that which they were appointed principally to instruct the Church in, and direct it unto the expectation of, was upon his coming accomplished and fulfilled, so that their end was absolutely taken away; and they could no more truly teach the mind and will of God: for they would still direct unto that which was to come, after it was past and accomplished. And this is that which the Apostle *Paul* so variously proves, and fully confirms in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, especially in the 7, 8, 9, and 10 Chapters.

Secondly, The Lord Christ during their continuance, was to come as the Lord over his whole House, with more full and ample authority, than *any* of those, whom God had employed in the institution of his Ordinances of old, were intrusted withal, *Heb.*1.1,2, 3. *He spake in former days by the* Prophets, *but now by the Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all*, Chap.3.5,6. *Christ as a Son over his own House, whose House are we.* And therefore they were all to be at his disposal, to confirm or remove, as he saw reason and occasion. And this he did *virtually* in the sacrifice of him;

himſelf, or the blood of his Croſs, fulfilling and finiſhing of them all, *John* 19. 30. *Breaking down the middle wall of partition, aboliſhing in his fleſh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances, he took it out of the Way, nayling it to his croſs*, Epheſ. 2. 15. Col. 2. 14.

Secondly, *Authoritatively*, by his Spirit in the Apoſtles, and the doctrine of the Goſpel preached by them, *Act.* 15. 10, 11. *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoak upon the neck of the Diſciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear; but we believe that through the Grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt we ſhall be ſaved, even as they*, Gal. 3. 24, 25. *Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaſter*, Chap. 5. 2, 3, 4. And *eventually*, or providentially, when he cauſed *ſacrifice and offering to ceaſe, by the Prince of the people, that came with an Army making deſolate, to deſtroy both City and Sanctuary*, Dan. 9. 26, 27. according to his prediction, *Mat.* 24. 2. But now under the *New Teſtament*, the Worſhip that is appointed in the Goſpel, is founded in, and built upon what is already paſt and accompliſhed,

pliſhed, namely the death and life of Jeſus Chriſt, with the ſacrifice and attonement for ſin made thereby, 1 *Cor.* 11.23,24,25, 26. which can never be again performed; neither is there any thing elſe to the ſame purpoſe, either *needful* or poſſible, *Heb.* 10. 26. So that there is not any ground left for any new inſtitution of Worſhip, or any alteration in thoſe that are already inſtituted. Nor,

Secondly, Can any one be expected to come from God with a greater and more full authority for the Revelation of his mind than that wherewith his only Son was accompanied; which yet muſt be, if any alterations were to be made in the appointments of Worſhip that he hath inſtituted in the Goſpel.

For no Inferiour, nor an Equal Authority, can abolish or alter that which is already appointed, ſo as to give ſatisfaction unto the Conſciences of Men in obedience unto ſuch alterations. And therefore becauſe there aroſe not a Prophet like unto *Moſes* under the Old Teſtament, there could be no alteration made in his Inſtitutions, but the Church was bound ſeverely to obſerve them all until the coming of Chriſt, *Mal.* 4. 4. *Remember ye the Law of Moſes my Ser-*

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vant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Iſrael, with his Statutes and Judgements; and that becauſe *there aroſe not a Prophet afterwards in Iſrael, like unto Moſes, whom the Lord knew face to face*, Deut. 34. 10. And our Apoſtle to prove the right of Chriſt to alter the Ordinances of the Law, lays his foundation in manifeſting that he was *above the Angels*, Heb. 1. 4. *being made ſo much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*, and that becauſe the Law was given by the *Miniſtry* of Angels, *chap.* 2. 2. And ſo alſo that he was greater than *Moſes*, chap. 3. 3. *For this man was accounted worthy of more glory than Moſes, in as much as he who hath builded the Houſe, hath more honour than the Houſe; Moſes verily was faithful in all his Houſe, as a Servant, but Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe*: Becauſe *Moſes* was the Law-giver, and the Mediator between God and Man in the giving of the Law. Now if this be the ſole foundation and warrant of the alteration made of *Moſaical* Ordinances by Chriſt, namely that he was greater, and exalted above all thoſe whoſe *Miniſtry* was uſed in the diſpenſation of the Law, unleſs ſome can be thought to be greater, and exalted in authority above the Son of God,

there can be no alteration expected in the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel.

Qu. 6. *May not ſuch an Eſtate of Faith and Perfection in Obedience be attained in this life, as wherein Believers may be freed from all Obligations, unto the obſervation of Goſpel Inſtitutions?*

Anſw. No! For the Ordinances and Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, being inſeparably annexed unto the Evangelical Adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace, they may not be left unobſerved, diſuſed, or omitted, whilſt we are to walk before God in that Covenant without contempt of the Covenant it ſelf, as alſo of the Wiſdom and Authority of Jeſus Chriſt. Heb.3.3,4,5,6. Rom.6.3,4,5,6. Luk.22.19,20. 1Cor.11.24,25,26. Heb.10.25. Rev.2.5. chap.3.3.

Explication.

All our faith, all our obedience in this life, whatever may be obtained, or attained unto therein, it all belongs unto our walking with God in the Covenant of Grace, wherein God dwells with Men, and they are his People, and God himſelf is with them to be their God. Other ways of communion with him,

him, of obedience unto him, of enjoyment of him, on this ſide Heaven and Glory, he hath not appointed nor revealed. Now this is the Covenant that God hath made with his people, *That he will put his Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to him a People, and he will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will he remember no more*, Heb.8 9 10, 11, 12. And whatever men attain unto, it is by vertue of the grace of that Covenant. Nor is there any grace promiſed in the Covenant to lead men in this *life*, or to give them up unto a ſtate of perfection ſhort of glory. Unto this Covenant, are the Inſtitutions of Goſpel-Worſhip annexed, and unto that adminiſtration of it which is granted unto the Church upon the coming and death of Chriſt. Without a renunciation and relinquiſhment of that Covenant, and the grace of it, theſe inſtitutions cannot be omitted or deſerted. If men ſuppoſe that they have attained to an eſtate wherein they need neither the grace of God, nor the mercy of God, nor the blood of Chriſt, nor the Spirit of Chriſt, it is not much material what they think of the Ordinances of Worſhip. Their pride and folly, without that mercy

which is taught, promised and exhibited in those Ordinances, will speedily be their ruine. Besides, the Lord Christ is the absolute *Lord over his own house*, Heb.3.4,5,6. And he hath given out the Laws whereby he will have it guided and ruled whilst it is in this World. In and by these Laws, are his Ordinances of Worship established. For any persons on what pretence soever, to plead an exemption from the obligation of those Laws, it is nothing but to cast off the *Lordship* and dominion of Christ himself. And yet farther, to secure our obedience in this matter, he hath expresly commanded the continuance of them until his coming unto Judgement, as in the places above-quoted will appear.

Qu.7. *What are the chief things that we ought to aim at in our observation of the institutions of Christ in the Gospel?*

Answ. 1. To sanctifie the Name of God. 2. To own and avow our professed subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. To build up our selves in our most holy Faith. And 4. To testifie and confirm our mutual love as we are Beleivers. (1.) Lev.10.3. Heb 12.28,29. (2.) Deut. 26.17. Josh. 24. 22. 2Cor.8.5. (3.) Ephes.4. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Jude

Jude 20. (4.) 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.

Explication.

That we may profitably and comfortably, unto the glory of God, and our own edification, be exerciſed in the obſervation of the Inſtitutions and Worſhip of God, we are always to conſider what are the *ends* for which God hath appointed them, and commanded our attendance unto them, that ſo our obſervance of them may be the *obedience of faith*. For what end ſo ever God hath appointed them unto, for that end are they uſeful and effectual, and for no other. If we come to them for any other end, if we uſe them for any other purpoſe, or with any other deſign, if we look for any thing in them or by them, but what God hath appointed them to communicate unto us, we diſhonour God, and deceive our own ſouls. This we ought diligently to inquire into, to know not only *what* God requires of us, but *wherefore* alſo he requires it, and what he aims at therein. Some of the principal things whereof, are enumerated in this anſwer. And it is well known how horribly many of the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, have been by ſome, eſpecially the *Papiſts*, abuſed, by a neg-

lect of the *ends* of God in them, and impoſing *new ends* of their own upon them, unto Superſtition and Idolatry. Grace is aſcribed unto the *outward obſervance* of them, whereas all Grace is of the promiſe, and the promiſe in the Covenant is given only to the faith of the right obſervers. The *elements* in the Sacrament of the *Euchariſt*, are turned into a God, firſt worſhipped, and then devoured, with many the like abominations.

Qu. 8. *How may we ſanctifie the name of God in the uſe of Goſpel Inſtitutions?*

Anſw. 1. By an holy reverence of his Soveraign Authority appointing of them 2. An holy regard unto his ſpecial preſence in them. 3. Faith in his promiſes annexed to them. 4. Delight in his Will, Wiſdom, Love and Grace manifeſted in them. 5. Conſtancy and perſeverance in obedience unto him in their due Obſervation. (1.) Levit. 10. 3. Mal 1 6. Rom 4. 11. Exod. 20. 6, 7. Jam. 4. 12. (2) Mat. 28. 20. Iſa. 59. 21. Exod. 29. 43, 44, 45. (3.) Ger. 15. 6. Heb 4. 2, 6. Exod. 12 27, 28. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18. chap. 7. 1. (4.) Pſal. 88. 1, 2 4 10. Pſal. 65. 4. Pſal. 36. 7, 8. (5.) Pſal. 23. 6. Pſal. 27. 4. Rev. 2. 3, 10. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 10 23 24, 25. Heb. 12. 3.

Explication

Explication.

This is the firſt thing that God requireth us to attend unto, in the celebration of the Ordinances of his worſhip; namely, that we therein *ſanctifie his name*, the greateſt duty that we are called to in this world. This he layes down as the generall rule of all we do herein Levit. 10.3. *I will*, ſaith he, *be ſanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Whatever we do in his worſhip, we muſt do it that he may be ſanctified, or whatever we do is an abomination to him. Now the principall wayes how we may herein ſanctifie the name of God are expreſſed. As,

Firſt, when in every Ordinance, we conſider his appointment of it, and ſubmit our ſouls and conſciences unto his *authority* therein, which if we obſerve any thing in his worſhip but what he hath appointed, we cannot do. Not formality, nor cuſtome, not the precepts of Men, not any thing but the *Authority* and command of God, is to be reſpected in this obedience. This is the Firſt thing that Faith regards in Divine Worſhip; it reſts not in any thing, cloſeth not with any thing, but what It diſcerns that

God hath commanded, and therein it eye his Authority as he requireth it, *Mal.*1.6. *I be a father where is mine honour? If I be Maſter, where is my Fear?* Rom.14.11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.* Reverence then unto the authority of God appointing his Worſhip, is a principal mean of ſanctifying the name of God therein. This was the ſolemn ſanction of all his Inſtitutions of old, *Deut.*6.4 5,6,7. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy might; and theſe words which I command thee this Day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children.* And the obſervation of them he preſſeth on this account, that the people might fear that *glorious and dreadful Name, The Lord thy God,* Deut.28.58. which Name he had ſo often engaged in his commands, ſaying, Thou ſhalt do it, *I am the Lord.* And in the New-Teſtament, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt propoſeth his authority as the foundation of his commanding, and our obſervation of all the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, *Mat.*28.18,19,20. *Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given me in Heaven and Earth, go ye therefore,*

fore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you. And he is to be conſidered in all our obedience, as the great and only Law-giver of his Church, as *the one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*, Jam. 4. 12. the Soveraign *Lord over his Houſe*, Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. unto whom every *knee is to bow*, and every conſcience to be in ſubjection; and he who *heareth not his voice*, is to be cut off from the People of God, *Act.* 3. 23. *It ſhall come to paſs, that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the People.*

Secondly, God hath frequently promiſed his *ſpecial preſence* in and with his inſtituted Ordinances. Of old both unto the *things* themſelves, and the *places* wherein they were, according to his appointment to be celebrated, thoſe of *places*, being alſo of his ſpecial Inſtitution. Under the New-Teſtament, all difference of, and reſpect unto *place*, is taken away, Joh. 4. 21. *The hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem worſhip the Father, but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and*

and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. And we are commanded in all *places* equally to make our Prayers and Supplications. But his preſence is promiſed and continued with the due celebration of the Things themſelves by Him appointed for his ſervice, *Mat.*28.20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, and lee I am with you even to the end of the World:* In them is the Tabernacle of God with Men, and he dwells among *them, and they are his People*, Rev.21. 3. the promiſe of Chriſt being, that where *two or three are aſſembled in his Name, there he will be in the midſt of them*, Mat.8.18, 20. And this promiſed preſence of God or Chriſt, conſiſteth, 1. In the power and efficacy which he by his Spirit implants upon his Ordinances to communicate his grace and mercy unto his Church; it being his Covenant, that his Spirit ſhall accompany his word for ever unto that purpoſe, *Iſa.*59.21. 2. In the ſpecial Bleſſing which he gives his People in thoſe Duties, both in the acceptance of them, and teſtifying his good will unto them, *Exod.*29.42,43,44,45. *At the Tabernacle of the Congregation, will I meet with the People, ſaith the Lord, there will I meet with the Children of Iſrael.*

And

And the Tabernacle ſhall be ſanctified by my glory, and I will dwell amongſt the Children of Iſrael, and will be their God, Zech. 2. 10. 11. Ezek. 20, 40, 41. *I will accept you with your ſweet ſavour*, Ezek. 43. 27. in both giving them intimate communion with himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, *John* 1. 3. By all theſe, he gives that *ſpecial preſence* which he requires an eſpecial reverence and regard of Faith unto, whereby his Name is yet farther ſanctified. 3. God hath given *ſpecial Promiſes*, or *Promiſes* of his ſpecial Grace unto them that attend upon him in his Worſhip in a due manner. And hereunto alſo belongs that ſacred Relation, which by vertue of *Divine Inſtitution* is between the *ſacramental* Elements, and the ſpecial Graces of the Covenant which they exhibit and confirm; and the mixing of theſe Promiſes with Faith, according as they are appropriated unto any particular inſtitution, belongs alſo to the right ſanctification of the Name of God. So alſo, 4. doth our *delight* in them: now this *delight* in the worſhip of God ſo much commended in Scripture, and propoſed unto our example, conſiſts not in any carnal ſelf-pleaſing, or ſatisfaction in the outward *modes* or manner of the performance of Divine Wor-

Worſhip, but it is an holy ſoul-refreſhing contemplation on the Will, Wiſdom, Grace, and Condeſcention of God, in that he is pleaſed of his own ſoveraign meer will and grace, ſo to manifeſt himſelf unto ſuch poor ſinful Creatures as we are; ſo to condeſcend unto our weakneſs, ſo to communicate himſelf unto us, ſo to excite and draw forth our ſouls unto himſelf, and to give us ſuch pledges of his gracious intercourſe with us, by Jeſus Chriſt: by the contemplation of theſe things, is the ſoul drawn forth to delight in God.

Laſtly, whereas great *oppoſition* lies oftentimes againſt the Churches obedience unto God in this matter, and much *perſecution* befalls it on that account, great *wearineſs* alſo being apt from the remainders of unbelief, carnal wiſdom, indwelling ſin, weakneſs of the fleſh in Believers themſelves, to ariſe in the courſe thereof, and many temptations alſo beſet them on every hand, to turn them aſide from the way of Truth and Holineſs, *Conſtancy* and *Perſeverance* in the due and orderly celebration of all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, belongs unto this duty. And this *perſeverance* reſpecteth both the things themſelves, and the manner of their performance, both which are of the higheſt concernment

cernment for us diligently to attend unto.

Firſt, as to the *things themſelves*; herein do we principally glorifie God, and give due honour unto Jeſus Chriſt, when we abide in our profeſſed ſubjection unto him, and obſervance of his commands, againſt difficulties, oppoſitions and perſecutions. This he taketh notice of, Rev. 2. 13. *Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denyed my faith, even in thoſe dayes wherein* Antipas *was my faithfull Martyr, who was ſlain among you where Satan dwelleth.* And this he requireth of us indiſpenſably if we will be his Diſciples, or ever hope to obtain the reward, Mat. 10. 38, 39. *He that taketh not his Croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*; and it is he who endureth unto the end, that ſhall be ſaved, *Matth.* 24. 13. And unto them who are faithfull unto the death, and them alone doth he give the Crown of of Life, *Rev.* 2. 10. giving us caution not to loſe thoſe things which we have wrought, that we may receive a full reward, 2. *John* 8. And as to the manner of their performance, two things are to be regarded in this duty of perſeverance, and the ſanctification of the name of God therein.

Firſt, The *inward principle* of our obedience, our faith and love which are to be pre-

preserved from decay, Rev. 2. 4, 5. *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love; remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works*, Chap. 3. 3. *Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast and repent.*

Secondly, The *outward manner* of observance which is to be kept intire, according to the primitive institution of Christ; 1 Cor. 11.23. *I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you*, not admitting any corruptions in it to avoid the greater trouble, Gal. 5. 11. *And I Brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer Persecution?*

Qu. 9. *How do we in our Observation of them profess our subjection unto the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel?*

Answ. In that being all of them 1. Appointed by him as the head Law-giver and King of his Church. And 2. Made by him the ensignes and tokens of his Kingdom and Subjects, in their due observation principally consists that profession of him and his name, which he so often calleth us unto, and so indispensably requireth at our hands, Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23.

Heb.

Heb. 3. 6. Heb. 12. 25. John 8. 31. Chap. 13. 13. Chap. 14. 15, 21, 23. Chap. 15. 14, 17. Chap. 13. 35. Chap. 15. 14. Luke 9. 26. Rom. 10. 10. 1 John 2. 3, 4.

Explication.

The ground and reaſon of this Duty is evident. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſtreightly enjoyns all his Diſciples the *profeſſion* of his name, and layes it on them as indiſpenſable unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, with the mouth confeſſion, or profeſſion, is made unto ſalvation.* See *John* 12. 42, 43, 44, 45. Now this *profeſſion* of the name of Chriſt, which is ſo much abuſed and miſtaken in the World, conſiſts in the *keeping of his commandments*, John 15. 14. *ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*: So alſo Mat. 28. 20. his Diſciples are to be taught to do, and obſerve, whatever he commandeth. Now whereas he is the head and King of the Church, the next immediate and ſpecial Lawgiver of it, appointing unto it all its Ordinances, and its whole worſhip, as it becomes him who is Lord of the houſe, the inſtitutions of the Goſpel worſhip are the moſt eſpecial commands: and in their obſervation, conſiſts

consists that *profession* of him which he r
quires of us; Therein doth he call the
out of the world by profession, whom h
hath redeemed out of it by his blood, 1 C
6. 15, 16, 17. *Rev.* 5. 9. In these he exe
ciseth his *Kingly*, or *Lordly* power over h
Church. *Heb.* 3. 6. And in the willing
bedience of his people, gathering themsel
unto the Ensigns of his Rule, he is glorifi
in the World.

Qu. 10. *How do we in and by them bu
up our selves in our most holy faith?*

Answ. By the exercise of that comm
nion with God in Christ Jesus, which
their due Observation he graciously inbi
and admits us unto, for the increase of
grace in us, and the testification of h
love and good will towards us. Gen. 1
10. Levit. 26. 11, 12. Prov. 9. 5, 6. Eze
26. 27, 28. Zach. 14. 16, 17. Mat. 26. 2
28. Rom. 6. 3.

Explication.

The next and principall ends of all instit
ted worship in respect of Believers, are t
increase of the Grace of God in them, the
edification in their most holy faith, and the
testi

teſtification of the good will of God unto them, Epheſ. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; that we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs whereby they lye in wait to deceive; but ſpeaking the truth in love; may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt, from whom the whole body fitly joynted together and compacted, by that which every joynt ſupplyeth according to the effectuall working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love.* Whence alſo is that prayer of the Apoſtle for the bleſſing of God upon the Church, in the uſe of them, Epheſ. 3. 16, 17, 18. *That he will grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man; that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in*

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testification of the good will of God unto them, Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love; may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joynted together and compacted, by that which every joynt supplyeth according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it self in love.* Whence also is that prayer of the Apostle for the blessing of God upon the Church, in the use of them, Ephes. 3. 16, 17, 18. *That he will grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in*

love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, the length, and heighth, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God: For theſe ends, and with a deſign to have them accompliſhed, in and upon their ſouls, ought they to attend unto them. James 1.21. *Receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word of God, which is able to ſave your ſouls,* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.* Unto the effecting of theſe ends, eſpecially the increaſe and eſtabliſhment of our faith, are they ſuited and appointed of God, whereon all their efficacy doth depend. In their due obſervation, doth God give out that ſupply of Grace which he hath promiſed, *Epheſ.* 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. And thus alſo is faith exerciſed, in an eſpecial manner, which is the only ordinary means of its growth and increaſe. Habits both *acquired*, and *infuſed*, are increaſed and ſtrengthened by frequent acts on ſuitable objects, Hoſ. 6. 3. *Then ſhall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.* In the celebration of Goſpel Ordinances, God in Chriſt propoſeth himſelf in an intimate manner to the believing ſoul, as his God, and reward; and his love in Chriſt,

in an eſpeciall manner in ſome Ordinances. So doth Chriſt alſo exhibit himſelf thereunto, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſupp with him, and he with me,* Faith therefore directed by the word to reſt in God, to receive the Lord Chriſt in the obſervation of his Ordinances, is excited, increaſed, ſtrengthened, and that in anſwer unto the appointment and promiſes of God.

Qu. 11. *How are mutuall love and communion among Believers teſtified and confirmed in their Obſervation?*

Anſw. In that they are appointed by the Lord Chriſt for that end, and in their own nature as attended unto in their Aſſemblies, are in an eſpecial manner ſuited unto that purpoſe. John 13. 35. 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. Ephel. 4. 4, 5, 6.

Explication.

The principles of mutual ſpirituall love among Believers, ariſe from their relation unto *one Father*, Matth. 23. 9. *One is your Father*

which is in Heaven: who giveth unto all them that believe in Chriſt, *Power to become the ſons of God*, John 1.12. And their being all *Children* of the ſame Family, that family in Heaven and Earth which is called after the name of God the Father of it, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 3.14.15. and unto Chriſt Jeſus as their elder Brother, who is not *aſhamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. 2.11. being by him born of God; and from their participation of one and the ſelf ſame Spirit, which dwelleth in them, as they are the *Temple of God*, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in them 1 *Cor.* 3.16. as alſo in all the fruits of that one Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 12.4,5,6,7,8. and in that *one faith* and hope whereunto they are called, Eph. 4.4,5,6, *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* And that love which is not built on theſe principles and foundations, is not *Evangelical*, what ever other ground it may have, or occaſion it may pretend unto. Communion of Saints conſiſts in their mutual love duly exerciſed according to rule, and all communion is an effect of Union. In Union there

therefore muſt lye the ſprings of love: and this conſiſts in a joynt incorporation of Believers into Chriſt; *for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, ſo alſo is Chriſt*; for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body; and this they have by the means before mentioned, namely their adoption, faith, and inhabitation of Spirit. Now in the joynt celebration of the Ordinances of Gods worſhip, they altogether make profeſſion of theſe principles, and act that one faith, hope, and love jointly, whereof they are made partakers, and thereby grow up more and more into the head by that which every joynt ſupplieth, *Eph.* 4. 16. And ſome of them are peculiarly deſigned by the Lord Chriſt, for the teſtification of their love, and union among themſelves, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *the cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? as we being many are one bread, & one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

Qu. 12. *What is principally to be attended unto by us in the manner of the celebration of the worſhip of God, and obſervation of the inſtitu-*

institutions and Ordinances of the Gospel?

Answ. **That we observe and do all whatsoever the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe, in the way that he hath prescribed; and that we add nothing unto, or in the observation of them, that is of mans invention or appointment.** Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Jer. 7. 27. Mat. 15. 9, 13. Mat. 17. 5. Colos. 2. 3. Mat. 28. 20. Heb. 3 3, 4, 5, 6. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Rev. 22. 18. 1 Chron. 16, 13. Isa. 29. 13.

Explication.

This was in part spoken to before on the *third Question*, where it was shewed that the *Scripture* is the only way and means, whereby God hath revealled what that worship is, which he will accept in and of the Church. Here, moreover, as to the duty of the Church in this matter, three things are asserted.

First, That we are to observe and *do all whatsoever* the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe. This lyes plain in the command, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* And we are directed unto it in the injunction given us from Heaven, to *hear*, that is obey him in all things; *Mat.* 17. 5. he being the *Prophet* to whose teachings and instructions, we owe obedience on pain of extermination from among the people of God, *Deut.* 18. 15. *Act.* 3. 22, 23. Whatever he hath appointed, commanded, revealed as the will of God to be observed in or about the worship, of God that is to be kept & observed by the Church inviolably. For if we are his Friends & Disciples, we will keep his commandments. No *disuse* of what continuance soever, can discharge us from the observation of institutions. After the Feast of *Tabernacles* had been *disused* from the times of *Joshua*, unto the return from the captivity, the restoration of it was required of God and accepted with him, *Neh.* 8. 17. No

abuse

abuse of how high a nature soever can absolve us from obedience unto an institution, 1 *Cor.*18.19,20,21,22, 23. After the great abuse of the Lords Supper in that Church, the Apostle recalls them again unto the observation of it, according to the institution of Christ. And after the defilement of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, under the Anti-Christian apostacy, yet the Temple & the Altar are to be measured again, *Rev.*11. 1. & the Tabernacle of God was again to be raised amongst men. *Rev.*21. 3. No opposition, no persecution, can give the Church a dispensation wholly to omit, and lay aside the use of any thing that the Lord Christ hath commanded to be observed in the worship of God, whilest we are under the obligation of that great rule, Acts 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* It is true in the observation of positive institutions, we may have regard unto rules and prescriptions of prudence, as to times, places, and seasons; that by no inadvertency or miscarriage of ours, or advantage taken by the adversaries of the truth, the edification of the truth, the edification of the Church be hindred. So the Disciples met with *the doors shut* for fear of the *Jewes*, John 20. 19. and *Paul* met with the Disciples in the night, in *an upper chamber*, for the celebration of all the Ordinances of the Church, *Acts* 20. 7, 8. yet as to the obligation unto their observation, it indispensably binds us, and that alwayes, & that as to all the institutions of Christ whatever, Heb. 10. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.* To dispence with Christs commands practically is unlawful; much more doctrinally; most of all *authoritatively* as the *Pope* takes on himself to do. This then is the Churches duty, to search out all the commands of

Christ recorded in the Gospel, and to yield obedience unto them. We are not in this matter, to take up meerly with what we find in practice amongst others, no though they be men good or holy. The duty of the Church, and consequently of every member of it in his place and station, is to search the Scriptures, to inquire into the mind of Christ, and to find out whatever is appointed by him; or required of his Disciples; and that with hearts and minds prepared unto a due observation of whatever shall be discovered to be his will.

Secondly, Whatever belongs unto the worship of God in the *way and manner* whereby any of the Ordinances of Christ is to be performed, comes also under the command of Christ which is duly to be attended unto, & observed. Indeed whatever is of this nature appointed by Christ, it doth therefore belong to the worship of God. And what is not so appointed, neither doth, nor can be any part thereof. Of this nature are the celebration of all other Ordinances with prayer, for *every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. of some of them indispensably in the assemblies of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. Chap. 11. 20, 24, 25, 33. With care, in the observation of the general rules

rules of love, modesty, condescention and prudence, *doing all things decently and in order*, 1 Cor. 11. 33. Chap. 14. 40. *Gestures* in some sacred actions, *Mat.* 26. 20, 26. John 13. 23. All which the Church is diligently to inquire into, as things that belong to the pattern of the house of God, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, the forms thereof, and the Ordinances thereof, with the Laws thereof, promised to be shewed unto it, *Ezek.* 43. 11. To attend carefully to their observation in its duty, being left at liberty as to all other circumstances, which no authority of man can give any real relation to the worship of God unto. Therein lyes the exercise of that Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of the mysterie of the Gospel, which is given unto the Church, *Ephes.* 1. 17, 18. It was the *wisdom* of the antient Church to do and observe all that God appointed, in the way and manner that he had prescribed for their observance, Deut. 4. 5, 6. *Behold I have taught you statutes and judgements, even as the Lord my God commanded me; keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding.* And herein is the command of of Christ kept inviolate and unblameable. The perswasion of some, that the Lord hath not pre-

prescribed all things wherein his worship is concerned, seems to proceed from a negligence in inquiring after what he hath so prescribed: & when once that perswasion is entertained, all farther inquiry is superseded, & despised. For what end should anyone seek after that which he is satisfied cannot be found? as that which is not cannot be. But this mistake will be elsewhere more fully discovered.

Thirdly, A principal part of the duty of the Church in this matter is, to take care that nothing be admitted or practised in the Worship of God, or as belonging thereunto, which is not instituted and appointed by the Lord Christ. In its care faithfulness and watchfulness herein, consists the principal part of its *loyalty* unto the Lord Jesus as the Head, King and Law-giver of his Church; & which to stir us up unto, he hath left so many severe interdictions and prohibitions in his word against all *additions* to his commands upon any pretence whatever, of which afterwards.

Qu. 13. *Are not some Institutions of the New Testament ceased, as unto any obligation unto their observation, and therefore now rightly disused?*

Answ. (1) Some Symbolical tokens of moral duties occasionally used, only for present

sent instruction in those duties, are mentioned in the Gospel, without any intention to oblige Believers unto the formal constant use or repetition of them. And (2.) Some temporary appointments relating unto gifts in the Church, bestowed only for a season in the first plantation of the Gospel are ceased: but (3) No institution or command of Christ, given unto the whole Church, relating unto the Evangelical administration of the New Covenant, for the use and benefit of all Believers, doth or shall cease to the end of the World, nor can be wholly omitted without a violation of the authority of Jesus Christ himself, John 13.12,13,14,15. Rom. 16.16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 1 Tim. 5.10. Mar. 6.13. Jam. 5.14. Matth. 28,20. 1 Tim. 6.14. 1 Cor. 11.26.

Explication.

Mention is made in the Scriptures of sundry things practised by the Lord Christ and his Apostles, which being then in *common use* amongst men, were occasionally made by them *Symbolical* instructions in moral duties. Such were *washing of feet* by one another, the *holy kiss*, and the like, but there being no more in them, but a sanctified use

directed

directed unto the present civil customs and usages, the commands given concerning them, respect not the *outward action*, nor appointed any continuance of them, being peculiarly suited unto the state of things and persons in those Countreys; as Joh. 13. 12, 13, 14, 15. *After he had washed their Feet, and had taken his Garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to ye? ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.* 'Tis evident that it is the moral Duty of Brotherly Love, in condescention, and mutual Helpfulness to be expressed in all necessary Offices, as occasion doth require, that is the thing which Jesus Christ here enjoyneth his Disciples, and leads them to by his own example, in an office of love then in use in those parts. The same is to be said of the *holy kiss*, Rom. 16. 16. which was a temporary occasional token of intire love which may in answer thereunto, be expressed by any sober usage of salutation among men to the same purpose. But the things themselves were not instituted for any continuance, nor do represent any special grace
o

of the New Covenant, which is inſeparable from every inſtitution of Goſpel worſhip properly ſo called. Common uſages or practices therefore, directed to be uſed in a due manner, and unto a proper end, where they are uſed, make them not inſtitutions of worſhip. Neither have they in them as ſo commanded or directed, any one thing that concurs to the conſtitution of a Goſpel-Ordinance: for neither had they their riſe in the authority of Chriſt, nor is any continuance of them enjoyned, nor any promiſe annexed unto them, nor any grace of the New Covenant repreſented or exhibited in them.

Beſides, there were in the firſt Churches continued for a while certain *extraordinary gifts*, that had their effects viſibly on the outward ſenſes of men, and tended not immediately unto the edification of the Church in their faith, but unto the conviction of others and vindication of the authority of them by whom the Goſpel was Preached and propagated. Such was that *gift of healing* the ſick, which being an eſpecial effect of the Holy-Ghoſt for the advantage of the Church in thoſe dayes, in ſome places it was accompanied by *anointing with Oyle*, but this being no univerſal practice, and uſed only in the exerciſe of a gift extraordinary, whoſe

whoſe uſe and being are long ſince ceaſed, it never was appointed nor intended to be of continuance in the Church, which is not tyed by the Lord Chriſt to the empty ſigns and ſhaddows of things whoſe ſubſtance is not enjoyned. Beſides, no ſpiritual grace of the Covenant was ever intimated, ſealed, or exhibited by that uſage of *anointing with Oyl*. The firſt mention of it is, *Mark* 6.13. where its practice is reckoned among the effects of that *extraordinary power* which the Lord Chriſt committed unto his *twelve Diſciples* on their firſt ſending out, & is referred unto the ſame *ſeries of miracles* which they wrought in purſuit, and by vertue thereof: *they caſt out many Devils, and anointed with Oyle many that were ſick, and healed them.* And by what is there recorded, the ſubſequent mention of it, *Jam.* 5.14. is to be regulated. But now unto a real *evangelical* inſtitution of worſhip; it is required (1) That it be a command of Chriſt manifeſted by his Word, or Example propoſed unto our imitation, *Matth.* 28. 20. (2) That it be given and enjoyned unto the *whole Church* with the limitation of its adminiſtration expreſſed in the Word, 1 *Cor.* 11. 25. (3) That unto the due performance of it, Goſpel grace be required in them that attend unto it. (4) That

it

it teach, or repreſent, or ſeal, or improve ſome grace of the Covenant, and have a promiſe of acceptation annexed unto it; and whatever is thus appointed, the Church is indiſpenſably to continue in the obſervation of, unto the end of the World.

Qu. 14. *May not the Church find out, and appoint to be obſerved, ſuch religious rites, as being adjoyned unto the celebration of Gods inſtituted worſhip, may farther the devotion of the Worſhippers, and render the worſhip it ſelf in its performance more decent, beautiful and orderly, as the appointing of Images, and the like?*

Anſw. All acceptable devotion in them that worſhip God, is the effect of faith, which reſpects the precepts and promiſes of God alone. And the comelineſs and beauty of Goſpel worſhip, conſiſteth in its relation unto God by Jeſus Chriſt, as the merciful high-Prieſt over his houſe, with the glorious adminiſtration of the ſpirit therein. The order alſo of it lyeth in the due and regular obſervation of all that Chriſt hath appointed, and therefore all ſuch inventions are in themſelves needleſs, and uſeleſs, and becauſe forbidden, unlawful to be obſerved, Rom. 1. 21. Chap. 14. 23. Heb. 4. 2. Chap. 11. 6. Deut. 13. 4. Chap. 27. 10. Chap. 30.

30. 2, 8, 20. Chap. 11. 27. Matth. 27. 5. Is
29. 13. Heb. 11. 4, 6. Ephes. 2. 18. 2 Co
3. 8, 9, 10, 11. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. Joh
4. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Matth. 28. 2
Exod. 20. 4. Deut. 4. 2. Matth. 15. 13. Is
29. 13, Deut. 12. 32. Chap. 17. 3.

Explication.

Three things are usually pleaded in t
Justification of the observance of such ri
and ceremonies in the worship of God.

(1.) That they tend unto the furth
rance of the *devotion* of the Worshipers.

(2.) That they render the Worship it se
comely and beautiful.

(3.) That they are the great preserve
of *order* in the celebration thereof. A
therefore on these accounts they may
instituted, or appointed by some, and o
served by all. But things are indeed qu
otherwise. *God is a spirit and will be w
shiped in spirit and in truth.* John 4. 2
And no devotion is acceptable unto hi
but what proceedeth from, and is an effe
of faith, for *without faith it is impossib
to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. and faith in
things respects the commands and autho
ty of God; for, saith he, *in vain do th*
w

worſhip me, *who teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, Matth. 15. 9. and he rejecteth all that honour which is given him by thoſe, whoſe fear towards him, or worſhip of him, *is taught by the precepts of men*, Iſa. 29. 13. Theſe things therefore being utterly deſtitute of divine Authority, they can no way farther or promote the *devotion* of the Worſhippers. What natural, or carnal affections may be excited by them, as men may inflame themſelves with Idols, *Iſa.* 57. 5. or what *outward*, outſide devotion they may direct unto, or excite, is uncertain; but that they are no means of ſtirring up the *grace of God* in the hearts of Believers, or of the increaſe or ſtrengthening of their faith, which things alone God accepts in Goſpel Worſhip, ſeeing they are not appointedby him for any ſuch purpoſe, is moſt certain. For to ſay that any thing will effectually ſtir up devotion, that is, excite, ſtrengthen or increaſe grace in the heart towards God, that is not of his own appointment, is on the one hand to reflect on his wiſdom and care towards his Church, as if he had been wanting towards it in things ſo neceſſary, which he declares againſt, Iſa. 5. 4. *what*, ſaith he, *could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* ſo

on the other, it extolls the wildom of me above what is meet to aſcribe unto it. Sha men find out that, which God would not, o could not, in matters of ſo great importanc unto his glory, and the ſouls of them tha obey him? yea, and it cannot be but tha attendance unto them, and their effect muſt needs divert the mind from thoſe pro per ſpiritual actings of faith and grace whic is its duty to attend unto. And this is evi dently ſeen in them who indulging to them ſelves in their obſervation in multiplyed in ſtances, as in the Church of *Rome*, hav changed the whole ſpiritual worſhip of th Church, into a *Theatrical* pompous ſhew of carnal devotion.

Secondly, The *comelineſs* and beauty o Goſpel worſhip, doth not in the leaſt depend upon them, nor their obſveration. Th Apoſtle doth in ſundry places expreſly com pare the ſpiritual worſhip of the Goſpel with that of the Law, whileſt the Church had a *worldly Sanctuary* and carnal Ordi nances, *Heb.* 9. 1. and although it be moſt evident, that the worſhip of the Old Teſta ment, did for the glory and ornaments o outward ceremonies, and the ſplendour o their obſervation, far exceed and excell tha worſhip which God commands now, as ſui table

table unto the *ſimplicity* of the Goſpel, yet doth the Apoſtle prefer *this* for glory, comelyneſs and beauty, unſpeakably above the other; which manifeſts that theſe things can have no reſpect unto outward Rites and Ceremonies, wherein the chief admirers of them can no way *vye* for glory with the old worſhip of the Temple. So the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. *if the miniſtration of death, written and engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of* Moſes, *for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how ſhall not the miniſtration of the ſpirit be rather glorious; for if the miniſtration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory, for even that which was made glorious had no glory, in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth; for if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.* He compareth the two miniſtrations, and the ſeveral worſhips of the *Law* and *Goſpel*, preferring *this* unſpeakably above the other; ſufficiently manifeſting, that the *glory* of it conſiſteth not in any pompous obſervance of outward Ceremonies. And elſewhere He declareth, that indeed it doth conſiſt in its relation to God in Chriſt, with

the liberty and boldness of the worshippers to enter into the holy place, unto the Throne of Grace under the Ministry of their merciful and faithful High-Priest, being enabled thereunto by the spirit of adoption and supplications; for therein, *through Christ we have an access in one spirit unto the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. as it is expressed Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21. *having therefore boldness to enter into the holyest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* This is the glory of Gospel worship, and the *beauty* of it whose consideration whilest the minds of men are diverted from, to look for beauty in the outward preparation of ceremonies they lose the priviledge purchased for Believers by the blood of Christ. Instead then of farthering the *beauty* and *comeliness* of Gospel worship, they are apt to lead men into a dangerous errour and mistake, namely that the beauty and excellency of it consists in such things, as upon a due consideration will appear to be mean and carn

and far beneath thoſe ceremonies and ordinances of the Old Teſtament which yet in compariſon of the Worſhip of the Goſpel, are called *Worldly*, *carnal*, *beggerly*, and are ſaid to have no glory.

Thirdly, They do not in the leaſt tend unto the preſervation of due *order* in the celebration of divine Worſhip. All *order* conſiſts in the due obſervation of *rule*. The rules of actions are either *natural*, or of his ſpecial appointment. Both theſe take place in religious worſhip; the inſtitutions or commands of Chriſt, containing the ſubſtance thereof, in their obſervation principally conſiſts the order of it. Whatever is of circumſtance in the manner of its performance, not capable of eſpecial determination, as emerging or ariſing only *occaſionally* upon the doing of that which is appointed, at this, or that time, in this, or that place, and the like, is left unto the rule of *moral prudence*, in whoſe obſervation their *order* doth conſiſt. But the *ſuper-addition* of ceremonies, neceſſarily belonging neither to the inſtitutions of worſhip, nor unto thoſe circumſtances whoſe diſpoſal falls under the rule of moral prudence; neither doth nor can add any thing unto the *due order* of Goſpel Worſhip. So that they are

altogether needleſs, and uſeleſs in the Worſhip of God. Neither is this the whole of the inconvenience wherewith their obſervance is attended; for although they are not in particular, and expreſly in the Scripture *forbidden*, for it was ſimply impoſſible that all inſtances wherein the wit of man might exerciſe its invention in ſuch things, ſhould be reckoned up and condemned, yet they fall directly under thoſe ſevere *prohibitions* which God hath recorded to ſecure his worſhip from all ſuch *additions* unto it, of what ſort ſoever. Yea the main deſign of the *ſecond precept* is to forbid *all making unto our ſelves* any ſuch thing in the worſhip of God, to add unto what he hath appointed, whereof an inſtance is given in that of *making and worſhipping Images*, the moſt common way that the ſons of men were then prone to trangreſs by, againſt the inſtitutions of God. And this ſenſe and underſtanding of the *commandment* is ſecured by thoſe enſuing prohibitions againſt the adding any thing at all unto the commands of God in his worſhip, Deut. 4. 2. *Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you, neither ſhall ye diminiſh ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God*, Chap. 12. 32. *what things ſoever*

I command you, obſerve to do it, thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it, Chap. 17. 3. to the ſame purpoſe were the places before mentioned, *Matth.* 15. 9. as alſo is that ſevere rule applyed by our Saviour unto the additions of the *Phariſees*, Verſe 13. *Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up.*

And there is yet farther evidence contributed unto this intention of the command, from thoſe places where ſuch evils and corruptions, as were particularly forbidden in the worſhip of God, are condemned, not on the ſpecial account of their being ſo forbidden, but on that more general, of being introduced without any warrant from Gods Inſtitutions or commands, Jer. 7. 31. *they have built the high places of* Tophet, *which is in the valley of the Son of* Hinnom *to burn their Sons and their Daughters in the fire, which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart.* Chap. 19. 5. *they have alſo built the high places of* Baal *to burn their Sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto* Baal *which I commanded not, nor ſpake, neither came it into my mind.* Theſe things were particularly forbidden; but yet God here *condemns* them as coming under the general evil of *making additions* unto his commands,

doing that which he commanded not, nor did it ever enter into his heart.

The *Papists* say indeed, that all *additions corrupting* the worship of God are forbidden; but such as farther adorn, and *preserve* it, are not so; which implies a contradiction; for whereas every *addition* is principally a *corruption* because it is an *addition*, under which notion it is forbidden, (and that in the worship of God which is forbidden is a corruption of it) there can be no such preserving, adorning addition, unless we will allow a preserving and adorning corruption. Neither is it of more force which is pleaded by them, that the additions which they make, belong not unto the *substance* of the worship of God, but unto the *circumstances* of it; for every circumstance observed religiously, or to be observed in the worship of God, is of the substance of it; as were all those *ceremonious observances* of the Law which had the same respect in the prohibitions of adding, with the most weighty things whatsoever.

Qu. 15. *Whence may it appear that the right and due observation of Instituted worship, is of great importance unto the glory of God, and of high concernment unto the Souls of Men?*

Answ.

Answ. This is fully taught in the Scriptures; as (1) God would never accept in any state of the Church, before or since the fall, moral Obedience without the observation of some institutions as tryals, tokens, and pledges of that obedience. And (2) in their use and signification by his appointment they nearly concern the principal mysteries of his will and grace. And (3) By their celebration is he glorified in the World: And therefore, (4) As he hath made blessed promises to his people, to grant them his presence and to bless them in their use: So (5) Being the tokens of the marriage relation that is betwixt him and them, with respect unto them alone he calls himself a jealous God; And (6) hath actually exercised signal severity towards the neglecters, corrupters or abusers of them. (1) Gen. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 4. 3, 4. Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11. Exod. 12. 24. Exod. 20. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Matth. 26. 26, 27. Eph. 4 11, 12. Rev. 1. 13. Rev. 21. 3. (2) Gen. 17. 10. Exod. 12 23, 24. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5. Matth. 26. 27. 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26, 27. (3) See question the eighth and ninth. (4) Exod. 29. 42, 43, 45. Deut. 14. 23. Psalm 133. 3. Matth. 18. 20 Rev. 21.

21. 3. (5) Exod. 20. 5. Deut. 4. 23, 24. Joſh. 24. 19. Ezek. 16. (6) Levit. 10. 1, 2. Num. 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. 1 Sam. 2. 28, 29. 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7. 2 Chron. 26. 16, 19. 1 Cor. 11. 30.

Explication.

For the moſt part, the inſtituted worſhip of God is neglected and deſpiſed in the World. Some are utterly regardleſs of it, ſuppoſing that if they attend, after their manner, unto moral obedience, that neither God nor themſelves are much concerned in this matter of his worſhip. Others think the diſpoſal and ordering of it to be ſo left unto men, that as to the *manner* of its performance, they may do with it as it ſeems right in their own eyes, And ſome follow them therein as willingly walking after their commandments, without any reſpect unto the will or authority of God. But the whole Scripture gives us utterly another account of this matter. The *honour* of God in this world, the *tryal* of our faith and obedience, the *order* and beauty of the Church, the *exaltation* of Chriſt in his profeſſed ſubjection to him, and the *ſaving of our ſouls* in the wayes of his appointment

are therein laid upon the due and right obſervance of inſtituted worſhip. And they who are negligent about theſe things, what ever they pretend, have no real reſpect unto any thing that is called Religion. Firſt therefore, in every ſtate and condition of the Church, God hath given his Ordinances of worſhip, as the *touchſtone* and tryal of its faith and obedience, ſo that they by whom they are neglected, do openly refuſe to come unto Gods tryal. In the ſtate of innocency, the tryal of *Adams* obedience according to the law of nature, was in and by the inſtitution of the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, *Gen.* 2. 16, 17. *And the Lord God commanded the Man, ſaying; of every tree of the garden thou maiſt freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* This was the firſt inſtitution of God, and it was given unto the Church, in the ſtate of innocency and purity. And in our firſt Parents neglect of attending thereunto, did they tranſgreſs the whole law of their creation, as failing in their duty in that which was appointed for their *tryal* in the whole; Chap. 3. 11. *Haſt thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhould-*

shouldest not eat? &c. And the Church in his family after the fall, built upon the promise, was *tryed* also in the matter of instituted worship. Nor was there any discovery of the wickedness of *Cain*, or approbation of the faith of *Abel*, until they came to be proved in their *sacrifices*, a new part of Gods instituted worship, the first in the state and condition of sin and the fall whereinto it was brought. *Gen.* 4. 3, 4, 5. *In process of time, it came to pass Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord, and Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof; and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering, but unto Cain, and his offering he had not respect.* The ground whereof the Apostle declares, *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.* In the observation of that first institution given to the Church in the state of the fall, did *Abel* receive a testimony of his being justified and accepted with God. Afterwards when *Abraham* was called, and peculiarly separated to bear forth the name of God in the world, and to become the spring of the Church for future ages, he had the institution of *cir-*

cumcision

cumciſion given him for the tryal of his obedience; the Law and condition whereof was, that he who obſerved it not ſhould be eſteemed an alien from the covenant of God, and be cut off from his People. Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11. *God ſaid unto Abraham, thou ſhalt keep my covenant, thou and thy ſeed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee, every manchild among you ſhall be circumciſed*, Verſe the (14) *and the uncircumciſed manchild whoſe fleſh of his foreskin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant.* And in like manner ſo ſoon as ever his poſterity were to be collected into a new Church ſtate and order, God gave them the Ordinance of the *Paſſover*, Exod. 12. 24. *Ye ſhall obſerve this thing for an Ordinance to thee and to thy Sons for ever*; and that upon the ſame penalty with that of circumciſion; to theſe he added many more on mount *Sinai*, *Exod.* 20. all as the tryals of their faith and obedience unto ſucceeding generations: How he hath dealt with his Church under the *new Teſtament*, we ſhall afterwards declare. In no ſtate or condition then of the Church, did God ever accept of *moral Obedience* without the obſervation

obſervation of ſome inſtituted worſhip accommodated in his wiſdom unto its various ſtates and conditions. And not only ſo, but as we have ſeen, he hath made the obſervation of them according unto his mind and appointment, the means of the tryal of Mens whole obedience, and the rule of the acceptance or rejection of them. And ſo it continues at this day, what ever be the thoughts of men about the worſhip which at preſent he requires.

Beſides, God hath appointed that his Ordinances of worſhip ſhall be as *effectual means* as to inſtruct us in the myſteries of his will and mind, ſo of communicating his love, mercy, and grace unto us; as alſo of that communion, or intercourſe with his holy Majeſty, which he hath graciouſly granted unto us by Jeſus Chriſt. And this as it is ſufficiently manifeſted in the Scriptures quoted in anſwer unto this queſtion, ſo it is at large declared in the writings of thoſe holy and good men, who have explained the nature of goſpel Ordinances, and therefore in particular we need not here inſiſt much in the farther proof of it. Thus *Abraham* was inſtructed in the nature of the covenant of grace by *circumciſion*, *Gen.* 17. 10. which is often explained in the old Teſta-

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ment, by applying it in particular to the grace of *converſion*, called the *circumciſion of the heart*, *Dent.* 10. 16. *Chap.* 30. 6. *Jer.* 4. 4. as alſo in the new Teſtament, *Coloſs.* 2. 11. And by the *Paſſover* where the people taught, not only the mercy of their preſent deliverance, *Exod.* 12. 23, 24. but alſo to look for the *Lamb of God* who was to take away the ſin of the world, *John* 1. 29. the true *Paſſover* of the people of God which was ſacrificed for them, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. how our inciſion or implanting into Chriſt, is repreſented and ſignified by our *Baptiſm*, the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4, 5. as alſo our communion with him in his death, by the Supper of the Lord, *Matth.* 26. 27. 1 *Cor.* 11. 25. and all theſe graces which they teach, they alſo *exhibit*, and are the means of the communication of them unto Believers. Moreover the experience of all Beleivers, who have conſcientiouſly waited upon God in their due obſervance, may be produced in the confirmation of it. The inſtruction, edification, conſolation, Spiritual ſtrength, courage, and reſolution, which they have received in and by them, hath been witneſſed unto in their lives, and ends; and they to whom theſe things are not of the greateſt importance, do but in vain pretend

a regard unto God in any thing whatever.

Farthermore, God hath appointed our duty in the observation of his instituted worship, to be the means of our *glorifying* him in the world. Nor can we otherwise give glory to God, but as we own his authority over us, and yield obedience to what he requires at our hands. And what we do herein, is principally evident in those duties which lie under the eye and observation of Men. Some duties of obedience there are which the world neither doth, nor can discern in Believers. Such are their faith, inward holiness, purity of heart, heavenly mindedness, sincere mortification of indwelling sin. Some whose performance ought to be hid from them, as personal prayer and almes. *Matth.* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Some there are, which are very liable to misconstruction amongst Men, as *Zeal* in many of the actings of it. But this conscientious observation of instituted worship, and therein vowing our subjection unto the authority of God in Christ, is that which the World may see, and take notice of, and that, which unless in case of persecution, ought not to be hid from them; and that which they can have no pretence of scandal at. And therefore hath God appointed that by this means

and way, we shall honour and glorifie him in the World, which if we neglect, we do evidently cast off all regard unto his concernments in this World. Herein it is, that we manifest our selves not be to ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, of him and his words, which he so indispensably requireth at our hands, *Mark* 8.38. *For*, saith he, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Hereby do we keep the commandments of Christ, as *his friends*, *John* 13. 35. for these peculiarly are *his commands*, and if we suffer for them, then we do most properly suffer as *Christians*, which is our *glory*, that 1 *Pet.* 4. 14, 15 16. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified, but let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busibody in other Mens matters, but if any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, But let him glorify God on this behalf.* And a happy and a blessed thing it is, to suffer for the observation of the special commands of Christ.

Father, to encourage us in our duty, the holy faithful God hath given us many great and precious promises, that he will graciously afford unto us his especial sanctifying blessing presence, in our attendance on his worship according to his appointment. For as he promised of old that he would make glorious the *place of his feet*, or abode amongst his people, *Isa.* 60. 13. that he would meet them in *his sanctuary*, the place of his worship, and there dwell amongst them, and bless them, and be their God, *Exod.* 29. 42, 43, 44, 45. *Deut.* 14. 24. so the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised his presence to the same ends and purposes, unto all them that assemble together in his name, for the observation of the worship which in the Gospel he hath appointed, *Matth.* 18. 20. *For*, saith he, *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* And therein is the *tabernacle* of God, his gracious dwelling place, with Men. *Rev.* 21. 3. Now when God offereth unto us his presence, his gracious blessing, sanctifying, and saving presence, and that in and by promises which shall never fail, what unspeakable guilt must we needs contract upon our own souls, if we neglect or despise the tenders of such grace?

But

But becauſe we are apt to be ſlothful, and are ſlow of heart in admitting a due ſenſe of ſpiritual things that fall not in with the light and principles of nature, to ſtir us up unto a diligence in our attendance unto the will of God in this matter, he hath declared that he looks upon our obedience herein as our *whole loyalty* unto him in that *conjugal covenant* which he is pleaſed in Chriſt Jeſus to take Believers into with himſelf, Jer. 3. 14. *turn O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you, and will take you one of a City, and two of a family, and will bring ye unto Sion, and I will give you* Paſtors *according to mine heart, which ſhall feed ye with knowledge and underſtanding.* Coming unto *Sion*, in the worſhip of God, under the leading and conduct of Paſtors according to the heart of God, is our anſwering the relation wherein we ſtand unto him as he is *marryed* unto us. And thereupon he teacheth us that as an *Husband*, he is *jealous* of our diſcharge of our duty in this matter, accounting our neglect of his worſhip, or profanation of it by inventions and additions of our own, to be *ſpiritual diſloyalty, whoredome* and adultery, which his ſoul abhorreth, for which he will caſt off an yChurch, or people and that for

ever, See *Exod.* 20. 5. *Deut.* 4 23, 24, *Jos.* 24. 19. *Ezek.* 16. whatever he will bear withal in his Church, he will not bear with that which his *jealousie* is exercised about. If it transgress therein, he will give it a bill of divorce; which repudiated condition, is the state of many Churches in the World, however they please, and boast themselves in their *meritricious* ornaments and practices.

To give yet farther strength unto all these considerations, that we may not only have rules and precepts, but examples also for our instruction, God hath given many signal instances of his *severity* against Persons who by ignorance, neglect, or regardlesness, have miscarried in not observing exactly his will and appointment in and about his worship. This was the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, *Levit.* 10. 1, 2. of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, *Numb.* 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. of the sons of *Ely*, a sin not to be *expiated with sacrifices and burnt offerings for ever*, 1 Sam. 2. 28, 29. of *Uzza* in putting the Ark into a Cart, when he should have born it upon his shoulders, 1 *Chron.* 16. 13. of *Uzzia* the King in offering incense contrary to Gods institution, that duty being appropriated unto the Priests

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of the poſterity of *Aaron*, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, 19. theſe are ſufficient intimations of what care and diligence we ought to uſe, in attending unto what God hath appointed in his worſhip; and although now under the new Teſtament he doth not ordinarily proceed to the inflicting of temporal judgements in the like caſes of neglect, yet he hath not wholly left us without inſtances of hit putting forth tokens of his diſpleaſure in temporal viſitations on ſuch miſcarriages in his Church, 1 Cor. 11. 30. *For this cauſe*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *many are weak, and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.* From all which it appeares of what concernment it is unto the glory of God, and the ſalvation of our own ſouls, to attend diligently unto our duty in the ſtrict and ſincere obſervation of the worſhip of the Goſpel; For he lets us know, that now a more ſevere puniſhment is ſubſtituted againſt ſuch tranſgreſſions in the room of that which he ſo viſibly inflicted under the old Teſtament, *Heb.* 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Qu. 16. *Is there yet any other conſideration that may ſtir up Believers to an holy and religious care about the due obſervation of the inſtitutions of the Goſpel?*

Anſw.

Answ. Yea! namely that the great apostacy of the Church in the last dayes, foretold in the Scripture, and which God threatneth to punish and revenge, consists principally in false worship, and a departure from the institutions of Christ. Rev. 14. 4, 5. Chap. 17. 1, 2, 3, 5.

Explication.

That there is an Apostacy of the Church foretold in the book of the Revelations, is acknowledged by all who with sincerity have inquired into the mind of God therein. The state of things at this day, and for many ages past in the World, sufficiently confirm that perswasion. And herein sundry things in general, are obvious unto every sober consideration thereof.

First the horrible evils, troubles and confusions that are to be brought into, and upon the World thereby.

Secondly, the high guilt and provocation of God, that is contained in it, and doth accompany it.

Thirdly, the dreadful vengeance that God in his appointed time will take upon all the promoters and obstinate maintainers of it. These things are at large all

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of them foretold in the *Revelation*, and therein alſo the Apoſtacy it ſelf is ſet forth as the cauſe of all the plagues and deſtructions that by the righteous judgement of God, are to be brought upon the World in theſe latter dayes. Now as God doth earneſtly call upon all that fear him, not to intermeddle, nor partake in the ſins of the *Apoſtates*, leſt they ſhould alſo partake in their judgements, Chap. 18. 4. *I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying, come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* So he doth plainly declare, wherein the apoſtacy and ſin it ſelf ſhould principally conſiſt, and that is in the corrupting and contaminating of the Ordinances of his Worſhip, or the introduction of falſe Worſhip joyned with the perſecution of them who refuſed to ſubmit thereunto. For this cauſe, is the ſin it ſelf ſet out under the name of *fornication*, and *whoredom*; and the Church that maintains it, is called the *Mother of Harlots*, *Chap.* 17. 5. That by fornication, and whoredom, in the Church, the adulterating of the worſhip of God, and the admiſſion of falſe ſelf-invented Worſhip in the room thereof, whereof God is jealous, is intended, the Scripture every where de-

clares. It is easie then to gather of how great concernment unto us it is, especially in these later dayes wherein this so hainous and provoking sin is prevalent in the World, carefully to attend unto the safe unerring rule of Worship, and diligently to perform the duties that are required therein.

Quest. 17. *Which are the principal institutions of the Gospel to be observed in the Worship of God?*

Answ. (1.) The calling, gathering and setling of Churches with their Officers, as the seat and subject of all other solemn instituted worship. (2.) Prayer with thanksgiving. (3.) Singing of Psalms. (4.) Preaching the Word. 5. Administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. (6.) Discipline and rule of the Church collected and setled; most of which have also sundry particular duties relating unto them, and subservient unto their due observation. (1.) Matth. 28, 19, 20. Acts 2. 41, 42. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11 12. Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 17. Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 15. (2.) 1 Tim. 2. 1. Acts 6. 4. Acts 13. 2. 3.

(3.) Ephes.

(3.) Epheſ. 5. 19. Coloſſ. 3. 16. (4.) 2 Tim. 4. 2. Acts 2. 42. 1 Cor. 14. 3. Acts 6. 2. Heb. 13. 7. (5) Matth. 28. 19. Matth. 26. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 11. 23. (6) Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. Rev. 2. 3.

Explication.

Theſe things being all of them afterwards to be ſpoken unto ſeverally and apart, need not here any particular Explication. They are the principal heads wherein *Goſpel-worſhip* conſiſteth, and whereunto the particular duties of it may be reduced.

Qu. 18. *Whereas ſundry of theſe things are founded in the light and law of nature, as requiſite unto all ſolemn worſhip, and are moreover commanded in the moral Law, and explications of it in the Old Teſtament; how do you look upon them as Evangelical inſtitutions to be obſerved principally on the authority of Jeſus Chriſt?*

Anſw. Neither their general ſuitableneſs unto the principles of right reaſon, and the dictates of the light and law of nature, nor the practice of them in the worſhip of God under the Old Teſtament, do at all hinder

hinder them from depending on the meer institution of Jesus Christ, as to those especial ends of the glory of God in and by himself, and the edification of his Church in the faith which is in him whereunto he hath appointed them: Nor as unto that especial manner of their performance which he requireth; in which respects they are to be observed on the account of his authority and command only, Matth. 17. 5. Matth. 28. 20. John 16. 23, 24. Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. Ephes. 1. 22. Chap. 2. 20, 21, 22. Heb. 12. 25.

Explication.

The principal thing we are to aim at in the worship of God, is the discharge of that duty we owe to Jesus Christ the King and head of the Church, Heb. 3. 6. *Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we,* 1 Tim. 3. 15. *That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.* This we cannot do unless we consider his authority as the formal reason and cause of our observance of all that we do therein. If we perform any thing in the worship of God on any other account, it is no part of

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our obedience unto him; and ſo we can neither expect his grace to aſſiſt us, nor have we his promiſe to accept us therein; for that he hath annexed unto our doing and obſerving whatever he hath commanded, and that becauſe he hath commanded us, Mat. 28. 20. *teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, and loe, I am with you alwayes even unto the end of the World.* This promiſed preſence reſpects only the obſervance of his commands. Some men are apt to look on this authority of Chriſt as that which hath the leaſt influence into what they do. If in any of his inſtitutions they find any thing that is ſuited or agreeable unto the light of nature, as Eccleſiaſtical ſocieties, government of the Church, and the like they ſay are, they ſuppoſe and contend, that that is the ground on which they are to be attended unto, and ſo are to be regulated accordingly. The interpoſition of his authority they will allow only in the *Sacraments* which have no light in reaſon or nature, ſo deſirous are ſome to have as little to do with Chriſt as they can, even in the things that concern the worſhip of God. But it would be ſomewhat ſtrange, that if what the Lord Chriſt hath appointed in his Church to be obſerved in

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particular, in an eſpeciall manner, for eſpecial ends of his own, hath in the general nature of it an agreement with what in like caſes the light of nature ſeems to direct unto, that therefore his authority is not to be conſidered, as the ſole immediate reaſon of our performance of it; but it is evident,

Firſt, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt being the King and Head of his Church, the Lord over the houſe of God, nothing is to be done therein but with reſpect unto his authority, Matth. 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him*; Epheſ. 4.15. *Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt, from whom the whole body fitly joynted together, and compacted by that which every joynt ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love*; Epheſ. 2. 20, 21. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom you alſo are built together for an habitation of God through the ſpirit.*

Secondly, And that therefore, the ſuitable-

tableneſs of any thing to right reaſon, or the light of nature, is no ground for a Church obſervation of it, unleſs it be alſo appointed and commanded, in eſpecial by Jeſus Chriſt.

Thirdly, That being ſo appointed and commanded, it becomes an eſpecial *inſtitution* of his, and as ſuch, is to be obſerved; ſo that in all things that are done, or to be done with reſpect unto the worſhip of God in the Church, the authority of Chriſt is alwayes principally to be conſidered, and every thing to be obſerved as commanded by him, without which conſideration it hath no place in the Worſhip of God.

Qu. 19. *What is an inſtituted Church of the Goſpel?*

Anſw. A ſociety of Perſons, called out of the World, or their natural worldly ſtate, by the adminiſtration of the Word and Spirit, unto the obedience of the Faith or the knowledge and Worſhip of God in Chriſt, joyned together in an holy bond, or by ſpecial agreement, for the exerciſe of the communion of Saints in the due obſervation of all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, Rom. 1. 5, 6. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 15. Heb. 3. 1. James 1. 18. Rev. 1. 20. 1 Pet.

1 Per. 2. 5. Epheſ. 2. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18.

Explication.

The Church, whoſe nature is here inquired after, is not the *Catholick* Church of elect Believers of all ages and ſeaſons from the beginning of the World unto the end thereof, nor of any one age, nor the *univerſality* of *profeſſors* of the Goſpel; but a *particular* Church wherein by the appointment of Chriſt, all the Ordinances of the Worſhip of God are to be obſerved and attended unto according to his Will. For although it be required of them, of whom a *particular* Church is *conſtituted*, that they be true Believers, ſeeing that unleſs a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, and ſo on that account they be members of the Church *Catholick*; as alſo that they make *viſible profeſſion* of faith and obedience unto Jeſus Chriſt, yet moreover it is the will, command and appointment of Chriſt, that they ſhould be joyned together in particular ſocieties, or Churches, for the due obſervation of the Ordinances of the Goſpel, which can alone be done in ſuch Aſſemblies. For as the members of the Catholick

tholick Church, are not known unto one another meerly on the account of that faith and union with Chriſt which makes them ſo, whence the whole ſociety of them is, *as ſuch inviſible* to the World and themſelves, *viſible* only on the account of their profeſſion, and therefore cannot meerly as ſuch, obſerve the Ordinances of the Goſpel, which obſervation is their profeſſion; ſo the *viſible Profeſſors* that are in the World in any age, cannot at any time *aſſemble* together, which from the nature of the thing it ſelf, and the inſtitution of Chriſt, is indiſpenſably neceſſary for the celebration o ſundry parts of that worſhip which he requires in his Church; and therefore particular Churches are themſelves an Ordinance of the New Teſtament, as the *National Church* of the Jews, was of old. For when God of old erected his Worſhip, and enjoyned the ſolemn obſervation of it, he alſo appointed a *Church* as his inſtitution for the due celebration of it. Thus was the people of *Iſrael* ſolemnly taken into a Church relation with him by covenant, wherein they took upon themſelves, to obſerve all the laws, and ordinances, and inſtitutions of his worſhip, Exod. 20. 19. *Speak thou with us, and we will hear.*

Exod.

Exod. 24. 3. *And Moſes came, and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the judgements, and all the people anſwered with one voice, and ſaid, all the words which the Lord hath ſaid we will do,* Deut. 5. 27. *All that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, we will hear it and do it.* And God accordingly appointed them Ordinances to be obſerved by the whole congregation of them together at the ſame time, in the ſame place. Exod. 23. 17. *Three times in the year all thy Males ſhall appear before the Lord thy God.* Deut. 16. 16. *Three times in a year all thy Males ſhall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he ſhall chooſe.*

Neither would God allow any ſtranger, any one not of the Church ſo inſtituted by him, to celebrate any part of his inſtituted worſhip, until he was ſolemnly admitted into that Church as a member thereof; Exod. 12 47, 48. *All the congregation of Iſrael ſhall keep it, and when a ſtranger ſhall ſojourn with thee and will keep the Paſſover to the Lord, let all his Males be circumciſed, and then let him come near and keep it, and he ſhall be as one that is born in the Land, for no uncircumciſed perſon ſhall eat thereof.*

To the ſame end and purpoſe, when the knowledge of God was to be diffuſed all the

World

World over, by the preaching of the Gospel, and Believers of all Nations under Heaven were to be admitted unto the Privilege of his Worship, *Ephes.* 2.15,16,17,18. The National Church of the Jews, with all the Ordinances of it, being removed and taken away, the Lord Christ hath appointed *particular Churches*, or united Assemblies of Believers, amongst and by whom he will have all his holy Ordinances of Worship celebrated. And this institution of his at the first preaching of the Gospel, was invariably and inviolably observed by all that took on them to be his Disciples, without any one instance of questioning it to the contrary in the whole World, or of the celebration of any Ordinances of his Worship amongst any Persons, but only in such Societies or particular Churches. And there is sufficient evidence and warranty of this institution given us in the Scripture: For,

First, They are appointed and approved by Christ, *Mat.* 18.15,16,17,18,19,20. *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses, every word may be esta-*

bliſhed; and if he ſhall neglect to hear, then tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican. Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed alſo in Heaven. Again, I ſay unto you, That if two of you ſhall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they ſhall aask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven: For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them.

Such a Church he ſuppoſeth and approveth, as his Diſciples had relation unto, and as any one of them could have recourſe unto, as a Brother, in obedience to his Commands and Directions. This could not be the *Church* of the Jews neither in its whole Body, nor in any of its Judicatories: For as at that time, there was a ſolemn Decree of *Excommunication* againſt all and every one that ſhould profeſs his Name, *Joh.* 9. 22. *The Jews had already agreed, that if any man did confeſs that he was Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the Synagogue*, which was executed accordingly upon the Man that was born blind, *verſ.* 34. which utterly diſabled them from

from making any use of this Direction, Command, or Institution of his for the present, with respect unto them. So afterwards the chief business of the Rulers of those Assemblies from the highest Court of their *Sanhedrim*, to the meanest Judicatory in their *Synagogues*, was to persecute them, and bring them unto death, *Mat.* 10. 17. *They will deliver ye up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues.* Joh. 15. 21. And it is not likely that the Lord Christ would send his Disciples for direction and satisfaction in the weighty matters of their obedience unto him, and mutual love towards one another, unto them with whom they neither had, nor could, nor ought to have any thing to do withal; and if they were intended, they were all already made as Heathens and Publicans, being cast out by them for refusing to hear them in their blasphemies and persecutions of Christ himself. Such a Society also is plainly intended, as whereunto Christ promiseth his presence by his Spirit, and whose Righteous Sentences he takes upon himself to ratifie and confirm in Heaven.

Moreover such a Church doth he direct unto, as with which his Disciples were to have familiar brotherly constant converse

and communion, with whom they were ſo to be joyned in ſociety, as to be owned or rejected by them according to their judgement, as is apparent in the practice enjoyned unto them; and without relation whereunto no duty here appointed could be performed. As therefore the very name of the *Church*, and nature of the thing, beſpeaks a ſociety, ſo it is evident that no ſociety but that of a particular Church of the Goſpel can be here intended.

Secondly, theſe Churches he calls his *Candleſticks*; *Rev.* 1. 20. In alluſion unto the *Candleſticks* of the Temple, which being an inſtitution of the old Teſtament, doth directly declare theſe Churches to be ſo under the New. And this he ſpeaks in reference unto thoſe *ſeven particular Churches* of *Aſia*, every one of which, was a Candleſtick, or an inſtitution of his own.

Thirdly, in purſuit of this appointment of Chriſt, and by his authority, the Apoſtles ſo ſoon as any were converted unto the faith at *Jeruſalem*, although the old National Church ſtate of the *Jewes* was yet continued, gathered them into a *Church* or ſociety for celebration of the ordinances of the Goſpel. Act. 2. 41, 42. *they that gladly received the word, were baptiſed, and they continued*

continued ſtedfaſtly together in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. verſe (47) *the Lord adding unto this Church dayly ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* And this company is expreſly called the *Church* at *Jeruſalem.* *Act.* 8. 1. This Church thus called and collected out of the Church of the *Jewes*, was the rule and pattern of the diſpoſing of all the Diſciples of Chriſt into *Church ſocieties* in obedience unto his command throughout the World. *Act.* 11. 26. *Act.* 14. 23, 27.

Fourthly, they took care for the forming, compleating and eſtabliſhing them in *order* according to his will, under the rule of them, given and granted unto them by himſelf for that purpoſe, all in a ſteddy purſuit of the commands of Chriſt. Act. 14. 23. *they ordained them Elders in every Church.* Tit. 1. 5. *For this cauſe left I thee in Creet that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City as I had appointed thee.* 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephe. 4. 11, 12.

Fifthly, they do every where in the Name, and authority of Chriſt, give unto theſe Churches rules, directions, and precepts for the due ordering of all things relating to the worſhip of God, according to

his minde, as we shall see afterwards in particular; For

First, there is no charge given unto the Officers, Ministers, Guides, or Overseers that he hath appointed, but it is in reference unto the discharge of their duty in such Churches. That Ministers or Officers are of Christs appointment, is expresly declared. Ephes. 4. 11, 12. *He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministery, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath set in his Church; first Apostles; secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers.* These are of Christs institution; but to what end? why, as they were ordained in every Church, *Act.* 14.23. *Tit.* 1. 5. So their whole charge is limited to the *Churches*, Act. 20. 17. *He sent to* Ephesus, *and called the Elders of the Church, and said to them*; Verse the 28. *take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy-Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood,* 1 Pet. 5. 2. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight thereof,* 1 Tim. 3 15. Colos. 4. 17. *And say to* Archippus

chippus *take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.* They were the Churches of Chriſt wherein they miniſtred, which Chriſt appointing them to take care of, manifeſts to be his own inſtitution and appointment. And this is fully declared, *Rev. chap.* 2. 3. where all the dealings of Chriſt with his *Angels*, or Miniſters, are about their behaviour and deportment among his *Candleſticks*, each of them, the Candleſtick whereunto he was related, or the particular Churches that they had care of, and preſided in; the Candleſticks being no leſs of the inſtitution of Chriſt, than the Angels. And they were diſtinct particular Churches, which had their diſtinct particular Officers, whom he treateth diſtinctly withall about his inſtitutions and worſhip; eſpecially about that of the ſtate of the Churches themſelves, and their conſtitution according to his mind.

Secondly, There is no inſtruction, exhortation or reproof given unto any of the Diſciples of Chriſt after his aſcenſion, in any of the books of the New Teſtament, but as they were collected into, and were members of ſuch particular Churches. This will be evidenced in the many inſtances of thoſe duties that ſhall afterwards be inſiſted on.

And the Lord Chriſt hath not left that as a matter of liberty, choice, or conveniency, which he hath made the foundation of the due manner of the performance of all thoſe Duties whereby his Diſciples yield obedience unto his commands, to his glory in the World.

Sixthly, The principal Writings of the Apoſtles are *expreſly* directed unto ſuch Churches, and all of them intentionally, 1 *Cor.* 1. 1. 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. *Gal.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1. 2. Chap. 4. 16 1 *Theſ.* 1. 1. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 1. *Epheſ.* 1. 1. compared with *Act.* 20. 17. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. or unto particular perſons, giving directions for their behaviour and duty in ſuch Churches, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Tit.* 1. 5. So that the great care of the Apoſtles was about theſe Churches, as the principal Inſtitution of Chriſt, and that whereon the due obſervance of all his other Commands doth depend. Of what nature or ſort theſe Churches were, ſhall be afterwards evinced; we here only manifeſt their inſtitution by the Authority of Chriſt.

Seventhly, Much of the Writings of the Apoſtles in thoſe Epiſtles directed to thoſe Churches, conſiſts in Rules, Precepts, Inſtructions, & Exhortations for the guidance and preſervation of them in purity and order,

der, with their continuance in a condition of due obedience unto the Lord Chriſt. To this end do they ſo fully and largely acquaint the Rulers and Members of them with their mutual duty in that eſpecial relation wherein they ſtand to each other, as alſo of all perſons in particular in what is required of them by vertue of their Memberſhip in any particular ſociety; as may be ſeen at large in ſundry of *Pauls* Epiſtles. And to give more ſtrength hereunto, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the revelation that he made of his mind and will perſonally after his aſcenſion into Heaven, inſiſted principally about the condition, order and preſervation of particular Churches; not taking notice of any of his Diſciples not belonging to them, or joyned with them. Theſe he warns, reproves, inſtructs, threatens, commands, all in order unto their walking before him in the condition of particular Churches, *Rev.* 2. and 3. at large.

Beſides, As he hath appointed them to be the ſeat and *ſubject* of all his Ordinances, having granted the right of them unto them alone, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. intruſting them with the exerciſe of that authority which he puts forth in the Rule of his Diſciples in this World, he hath alſo appointed the moſt holy

holy inſtitution of his *Supper* to denote and expreſs that union and communion which the members of each of theſe Churches have by his ordinance amongſt themſelves, 1 *Cor.* 10.17. *The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? For we being many, are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread.* And alſo he gives out unto them the gifts and graces of his Spirit, to make every one of them meet for, and uſeful in that place which he holds in ſuch Churches, as the Apoſtle diſcourſeth at large, 1 *Cor.* 12. from *verſ.* 15. to *verſ* 26. *Col.* 2.19. *Epheſ.* 4.16. It is manifeſt then that no Ordinance of Chriſt is appointed to be obſerved by his Diſciples, no communication of the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt is promiſed to them, no eſpecial Duty is required of them, but with reſpect unto theſe Churches of his Inſtitution.

In the anſwer to this Queſtion, four things are declared tending to the Explication of the nature of a particular Church or Churches.

(1.) The *ſubject matter* of them, or the perſons whereof ſuch a Church doth or ought to conſiſt. (2.) The *means* whereby they

they are brought into a condition capable of ſuch an Eſtate, or qualified for it. (3.) The *general ends* of their Calling. (4.) The *eſpecial means* whereby they are conſtituted a Church; which laſt will be ſpoken unto in the next Queſtion.

For the firſt, All men are by nature the Children of Wrath, and do belong unto the World, which is the Kingdom of Satan, and are under the Power of Darkneſs, as the Scripture every where declares. In this ſtate men are not Subjects of the Kingdom of Chriſt, nor meet to become Members of his Church. Out of this Condition they cannot deliver themſelves. They have neither will unto it, nor power for it, but they are *called* out of it. This *calling* is that which effectually delivers them from the Kingdom of Satan, and tranſlates them into the Kingdom of Chriſt. And this work or effect the Scripture on ſeveral accounts variouſly expreſſeth. Sometimes by Regeneration, or a New Birth, ſometimes by *Converſion*, or turning unto God; ſometimes by *Vivification*, or quickning from the dead; ſometimes by *Illumination*, or opening of the eyes of the blind; all which are carried on by *Sanctification* in Holineſs, and attended with Juſtification and Adoption; And as

theſe

theſe are all diſtinct in themſelves, having ſeveral formal reaſons of them, ſo they all concur to compleat that effectual Vocation or Calling that is required to conſtitute perſons Members of the Church. For beſides that this is ſignified by the typical holineſs of the Church of old, into the room whereof real holineſs was to ſucceed under the New Teſtament, *Exod.* 19. 6. *Pſal.* 24. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Pſal.* 15 1, 2. *Iſa.* 35 8. 9. *Iſa.* 54. 13. *Chap.* 60. 21. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath laid it down as an everlaſting Rule, That unleſs a man be *born again*, *he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, Joh. 3. 3. requiring Regeneration as an indiſpenſable condition in a Member of his Church, a ſubject of his Kingdom. For his Temple is now to be built of Living Stones, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Men ſpiritually and ſavingly quickned from their Death in Sin, and by the holy Ghoſt, whereof they are Partakers, made a meet Habitation for God, *Epheſ.* 2. 21, 22. 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. which receiving vital ſupplies from Chriſt its Head, increaſeth in Faith and Holineſs, edifying it ſelf in Love, *Epheſ.* 4. 15, 16. And as the Apoſtles in their Writings do aſcribe unto all the Churches, and the Members of them, a participation in this *effectual* Vocation,

tion, affirming that they are *Saints, called, sanctified, justified*, and accepted with God in Christ, *Rom.*1.5,6. 1 *Cor.*1.2. 1 *Cor.*4.15. Heb.3.1. Jam.1.18. 1 Pet.2.5. 2 Cor.6. 7, 18. 1 Cor.6.11. So, many of the Duties that are required of them in that relation and condition, are such as none can perform unto the glory of God, their own benefit, and the edification of others, (the ends of all obedience) unless they are partakers of this effectual Calling, 1 *Cor.*10 16,17. 1 *Cor.*12. 12. *Ephes.*4.16. Adde hereunto, that these Churches, and the Members of them, are not only commanded to separate themselves as to their Worship of God, from the World, that is, men in their worldly state and condition, but are also required, when any amongst them transgress against the Rules and Laws of this *holy Calling* above described, to cast them out of their Society and Communion, 1 *Cor.*5.13. from all which it appears who are the subject matter of these Churches of Christ; as also secondly, the means whereby they come to be so, namely the administration of the Spirit and Word of Christ, and thirdly, the general ends of their Calling, which are all spoken to in this answer.

Quest.20.

Queſt. 20. *By what means do Perſons ſo Called, become a Church of Chriſt?*

Anſw. They are conſtituted a Church, and intereſted in the Rights, Power, and Priviledges of a Goſpel-Church, by the Will, Promiſe, Authority and Law of Jeſus Chriſt, upon their own voluntary conſent and engagement to walk together in the due ſubjection of their Souls and Conſciences unto his Authority, as their King, Prieſt, and Prophet, and in an holy obſervation of all his Commands, Ordinances, and Appointments, Mat. 18.20. Chap. 28. 18,19. Act. 2.41,42. Exod. 24.3. Deut. 5.27. Pſal. 110. 3. Iſa. 44. 5. Chap. 59.21. Eph. 4.7,8,9,10. 2 Cor. 8.5.

Explication.

That the Lord Chriſt hath conſtituted ſuch a Church-ſtate as that which we enquire about, hath been proved already. Unto a Church ſo conſtituted, he hath alſo by his Word and Promiſe annexed all thoſe Priviledges and Powers which we find a Church to be entruſted withall. This he hath done by the ſtanding and unalterable Law of the Goſpel, which is the Charter of their

their ſpiritual Society and Incorporation. Neither are, nor can any Perſons be intereſted in the Rights of a Church any otherwiſe, but by vertue of this Law and Conſtitution. This therefore is firſt to be laid down, That the ſole moral foundation of that Church-ſtate which we enquire after, is laid in the Word, Law, and Appointment of Chriſt. He alone hath authority to erect ſuch a Society, he is the Builder of this Houſe, as well as the Lord over it, *Heb.*3.3,6. neither without it can all the Authority of Men in the World appoint ſuch a ſtate, or erect a Church. And all acceptable actings of men herein, are no other but acts of pure obedience unto Chriſt.

Farrhermore, We have declared that the Lord Chriſt by the diſpenſation of his Word and Spirit, doth prepare and fit men to be Subjects of his Kingdom, Members of his Church; the work of ſending forth the means of the converſion of the Souls of men, of tranſlating them from the power of darkneſs into light, he hath taken upon himſelf, and doth effectually accompliſh it in every generation. And by this means he builds his Church, *Mat.* 18. 20. For unto all perſons ſo Called, he gives Command that they ſhall do and obſerve whatever he hath

hath appointed them to do, *Mat.*28.20. in particular that they profeſs their ſubjection to him, and their obedience in joyning themſelves in that ſtate wherein they may be enabled to obſerve all his other Laws and Inſtitutions, with the whole Worſhip of God required therein. Being converted unto God by his Word and Spirit, they are to conſider how they may now obey the Lord Chriſt in all things. Amongſt his Commands, this of joyning themſelves in Church Societies, wherein he hath promiſed his preſence with them, *Mat.*18.20. that is, to dwell amongſt them by his Word and Spirit, *Iſa.*59.21. is the very firſt. This by vertue of that Command and Promiſe of his, they are warranted and enabled to do, nor do they need any other warrant. The authority of Chriſt is ſufficient to bear men out in the diſcharge of their Duty to him. Being then made willing and ready in the day of his power, *Pſal.*110.3. they *conſent*, chooſe and *agree*, to walk together in the obſervation of all his Commands. And hereby do they become a Church. For their becoming a Church, is an act of their willing obedience unto Chriſt. This obedience is an act of their Wills, guided by Rule; for this alſo is neceſſary, that they proceed herein

in according to the Rules of his Appointment afterwards to be unfolded. And herein upon their obedience unto the Commands of Chriſt, and faith in his promiſes, do Believers by vertue of his Law and Conſtitution, become a Goſpel-Church, and are really and truly intereſted in all the Power, Rights, and Priviledges, that are granted unto any Church of Chriſt. For in this obedience they do theſe two things which alone he requires in any perſons for the obtaining of an intereſt in theſe Priviledges. Firſt, They *confeſs* Him, his Perſon, his Authority, his Law, his Grace. Secondly, They take upon themſelves the *obſervance* of all his Commands.

Thus did God take the Children of *Iſrael* into a Church-ſtate of old. He propoſed unto them the Church-obedience that he required of them, and they voluntarily and freely took upon themſelves the performance of it, Exod. 24. 3. *And Moſes came and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the Judgements, and all the People anſwered with one Voice, and ſaid, All the words which the Lord hath ſaid, will we do.* So *Deut.* 5. 7. and hereby they had their ſolemn admiſſion into their Church-ſtate, and relation unto God. And the like

course they took whenever there was need of renewing their engagements, *Josh.* 24. 18, 21, 22. *And the People said, We will serve the Lord, for he is our God; and Joshua said unto the People, Ye are Witnesses against your selves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him; and they said, We are Witnesses.* This was the Covenant that was between God and that People, which was solemnly renewed so often as the Church was eminently reformed. Now although the outward solemnity and ceremonies of this Covenant were peculiar unto that People, yet as to the substance and nature of it in a sacred consent for the performance of all those duties towards God and one another, which the nature and edification of a Church do require, it belongs to every Church, as such, even under the Gospel.

And this is the way whereby Believers, or the Disciples of Christ, do enter into this state, the formal constituting cause of any Church. This account doth the Apostle give of the *Churches of the Macedonians*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* Before the performance of other duties, and in order thereunto, they first gave themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ,

Chriſt, or took upon themſelves the obſervance of his Commands and Inſtitutions, which is the intendment of that expreſſion. Among theſe Commands, one was, That they ſhould give up themſelves to the Apoſtles Doctrine, Rule, and Government, in the Order by Chriſt preſcribed, that is in Church-Order. This therefore they did *by the will of God*, according to his will and appointment. This deſcription doth the Apoſtle give of the way whereby the Believers of *Macedonia* were brought into Churches. It was by their own obedience unto the will of God, conſenting, agreeing, and taking upon themſelves the obſervation of all the Commands and Inſtitutions of Chriſt, according to the direction and guidance of the Apoſtles. So did the Believers at *Jeruſalem*, Act. 2.41,42. Being converted by the Word, and making profeſſion of that converſion in their Baptiſm, they gave up themſelves to a ſtedfaſt continuance in the obſervation of all other Ordinances of the Goſpel.

Beſides, the Church is an Houſe, a Temple, the *Houſe of God*, 1 Tim. 3.15. the *Houſe* of Chriſt, *Heb.* 3.6. the Temple of God, *Epheſ.* 2.21,22. Believers ſingly conſidered are *Stones*, living Stones, 1 *Pet.* 2.5. Now

how shall these *living Stones* come to be an House, a Temple? Can it be by occasional occurrences, civil cohabitation in political precincts, usage or custome of assembling for some parts of Worship in any place? These things will never frame them into a House or Temple. This can be no otherwise done but by their own voluntary consent and disposition, *Ephes.*2.19,20,21,22. *Ye are fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* Chap.4.16. *From whom the whole Body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of it self in love.* From these and sundry other places, it is manifest that the way and means of Believers coalition into a Church-state is their own obedience of Faith, acting it self in a joynt voluntary consent to walk together in an holy observation of the Commands of Christ, whence the being and union

on of a particular Church is given unto any convenient number of them, by his Law and Constitution.

Quest. 21. *Seeing the Church is a Society or spiritual incorporation of persons under Rule, Government, or Discipline, declare who or what are the Rulers, Governours, or Officers therein, under Jesus Christ?*

Answ. They have been of two sorts, (1.) extraordinary, appointed for a season only, and (2.) ordinary to continue unto the end of the World.

Quest. 22. *Who are the extraordinary Officers or Rulers, or Ministers of the Church, appointed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ therein for a season only?*

Answ. (1) The Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, with (2) the Evangelists and Prophets indowed with extraordinary Gifts of the holy Ghost, associated with them, and employed by them in their Work and Ministry. (1) Matth. 10. 2, 3. Act. 1. 26. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11. (2) Luk. 10. 1. 2 Tim. 4. 5. Tit. 1. 5. Act. 11. 27, 28. Act. 21. 9, 10. 11. 2 Cor. 1. 1.

Explication.

That the Church is a ſpiritual *Corporation*, attended with Rule and Government, is evident from the nature of the thing it ſelf, and teſtimonies of Scripture. Only as the Kingdom of Chriſt is not of this World, or worldly, ſo this Rule and Government of the Church, is not meerly external and ſecular, but ſpiritual. Neither doth this Rule at all belong unto it, merely as *materially* conſidered, in men yielding obedience unto the call which is the Foundation of the Church, nor *abſolutely* as it is formally conſtituted a Church by the conſent and agreement deſcribed, but moreover it is required that it be *organically* compleat with Officers or Rulers. Now to the conſtitution of ſuch a Society or Corporation, there is required,

Firſt, That the Perſons whereof it is conſtituted do *conſent* together into it for the attaining of the ends which they deſign. Without this no Society of any kind can exiſt. This is the form of mens coaleſcencie into Societies. And that there is in the Church ſuch a conſent and agreement hath been ſhewed.

Secondly, That there be Rules or Laws for

for the guidance and direction of all the Members of the Society, in order to their pursuit of the proper ends of it. That such Rules or Laws are given and prescribed by the Lord Christ unto the Church, will afterwards appear in our consideration of them in particular; so that the Church is a Society of men walking according unto Rule or Law, for the attaining of the ends of the Society.

Thirdly, That there be Authority instituted for to see to the due observation of these Rules and Laws of the Society, which consists in this; (1.) That some be appointed to *Rule* and Govern in the Church. (2.) Others to *Obey*, and be Ruled or Governed; both according to the Laws of the Society, and not otherwise. And both these are eminently found in this Church state, as we shall see in the ensuing Questions, with their Answers and Explications.

Now that these Officers or Rulers should be of two sorts, both the nature of the thing it self required, and so hath our Lord Jesus Christ appointed. For when the Church was first to be called, gathered, and erected, it was necessary that *some Persons* should be *extraordinarily* employed in that work; for *ordinary* Officers, antecedent unto the Call-

ling and erection of the Church, there could be none. And therefore these persons were in an *extraordinary* manner endowed with all that Power which afterwards was to reside in the Churches themselves; and moreover with that which was peculiarly needful unto the discharge and performance of that special duty and work that they were appointed unto. But when Churches were called, gathered, erected, and setled for continuance, there was need of Officers suited to their state and condition, called in an ordinary way; that is, in a way appointed for continuance unto the end of the World; and to be employed in the *ordinary* work of the Church, that is the duties of it, which were constantly incumbent on it by virtue of the Command and Appointment of Christ.

Quest. 23. *Who are the ordinary Officers or Ministers of Christ in the Church to be always continued therein?*

Answ. Those whom the Scripture calls Pastors and Teachers, Bishops, Elders, and Guides, Act. 14.23. Act. 20.17, 18. 1 Cor. 12.28. Ephes. 4.11. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3.1, 2. chap. 5.17. Tit. 1.5, 7. Heb. 13.7, 17. 1 Pet. 5.1.

Explication.

Explication.

Several names, are on ſeveral accounts, partly deſigning their authority, partly their duty, and partly the manner of their diſcharge thereof, aſſigned in the Scripture, to the ordinary Miniſters of the Churches. Sometimes they are called *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, Epheſ. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Sometimes *Biſhops* or *Overſeers*, Phil. 1. 1. Act. 20. 28. Tit. 1. 5. Sometimes *Elders*, 1 Pet. 5. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Act. 14. 23. Act. 20. 17. Sometimes *Guides*, Heb. 13. 7, 17. By all which names, and ſundry others whereby they are expreſſed, the ſame ſort, order, and degree of Perſons is intended. Nor is any one of theſe Names applied or accommodated unto any, but all the reſt are alſo in like manner; ſo that he who is a *Paſtor* or a Teacher, is alſo a *Biſhop*, or *Overſeer*, a *Preſbyter* or *Elder*, a *Guide* or *Ruler*, a *Miniſter*, a ſervant of the Church for the Lords ſake. And of all other names aſſigned to the Miniſters of the Church, that of *Biſhop* can leaſt of all be thought to have deſigned any ſpecial Order or Degree of preheminence amongſt them. For whereas it is but four times, or in four

four places used in the New-Testament, as denoting any Officers of the Church, in each of them it is manifest, that those expressed by the other names of Elders and Ministers are intended. So *Act.*20.28. the *Bishops* are the *Elders* of the particular Church of *Ephesus*, vers.17. *Phil.*1.1. there were *many Bishops* in that one particular Church, who had only *Deacons* joyned with them; that is, they were the Elders of it, *Tit.*1.8. the *Bishops* were the *Elders* to be ordained, *vers.*5. which persons are also directly intended, 1*Tim.*3.2. as is evident from the coincidence of the directions given by the Apostle about them, and the immediate adjoyning of *Deacons* unto them, *vers.*8. So that no name could be fixed on with less probability to assert from it a special supream order or degree of men in Ministry, than this of Bishops. Neither is there any mention in any place of Scripture of any such preheminence of one sort of these Church-Officers or Ministers over another; not in particular in those places where the Officers of the Church are in an especial manner enumerated, as 1 *Cor.*12,28. *Eph.*4.11. *Rom.*12.5, 6, 7,8. Nor is there any mention of any special *Office* that should be peculiar unto such Officers, or of any gifts or qualifications that

that ſhould be required in them; or of any ſpecial way of calling or ſetting apart to their Office; nor of any kind of Church that they ſhould relate unto, different from the Churches that other Elders or Paſtors do miniſter in; nor of any ſpecial Rule or Direction for their Trial, nor any Command for Obedience unto them, but what are common to all Miniſters of the Churches of Chriſt, duly diſcharging their truſt, and performing their duty; no intimation is given unto either Elders or Miniſters to obey them, or directions how to reſpect them, nor unto them how to behave themſelves towards them; but all theſe things are ſpoken and deliver'd promiſcuouſly and equally, concerning all Miniſters of the Goſpel. It is evident then, that theſe appellations do not belong unto one ſort of Miniſters, not one more than another; and for what is pleaded by ſome from the Example of *Timothy* and *Titus*, it is ſaid, That when any perſons can prove themſelves to be *Evangeliſts*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. to be called unto their Office upon antecedent *prophecy*, 1 Tim. 1. 18. and to be ſent by the Apoſtles, and in an eſpecial manner to be directed by them in ſome employment for a ſeaſon, which they are not ordinarily to attend unto, *Tit.* 1. 5.

Chap.

*Chap.*3.12. It will be granted that they have another duty and office committed unto them, than those who are only Bishops or Elders in the Scripture.

Quest.24. *What are the principal differences between these two sorts of Officers or Rulers in the Church, extraordinary and ordinary?*

Answ.(1) The former were called to their Office immediately by Jesus Christ in his own Person, or Revelation made by the Holy Ghost in his Name to that purpose; the latter by the suffrage, choice, and appointment of the Church it self. (2.) The former both in their Office and Work, were independent on, and antecedent unto all or any Churches, whose calling and gathering depended on their Office, as its consequent and effect; the latter, in both consequent unto the calling, gathering, and constituting of the Churches themselves, as an effect thereof, in their tendency unto compleatnes and perfection. (3.) The authority of the former being communicated unto them immediately by Jesus Christ, without any interveniem actings of any Church, extended it self equally unto all Churches whatever: that of the latter being deribed unto them from Christ

Christ by the election and designation of the Church, is in the exercise of it confined unto that Church wherein and whereby it is so derived unto them. (4.) They differ also in the Gifts which were suited unto their several distinct Works and Employments. (1.) Mat.10.1. Luk.10.1. Gal.1.1. Acts 1.26. Act.6.3. Act.14.23. (2.) Joh.20.21, 22, 23. Gal. 1. 1. Ephes.2.20. Rev.21.14. Acts 14.23. Tit.1.5,7. (3.) Mat. 28.18, 19, 20. 2 Cor.11.28. Act. 20.28. 1Pet.1.2. Col.4.17. (4.) 1 Cor. 12, 28, 29, 30. The answer hereunto is such as needs no further Explication.

Quest.25. *What is required unto the due constitution of an Elder, Pastor, or Teacher of the Church?*

Answ. (1.) That he be furnished with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, for the Edification of the Church, and the Evangelical discharge of the work of the Ministry. (2.) That he be unblameable, holy, and exemplary in his Conversation. (3.) That he have a willing mind to give up himself unto the Lord in the Work of the Ministry. (4.) That he be called and chosen by the suffrage and consent of the Church. (5.) That he be solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, and Imposition of hands

hands unto his Work and Ministry. (1) Ephes.4.8,11,12,13. (2) Tit.1.7,8,9. 2 Tim. 3.2,3,4 5 6,7. (3) 1 Pet.5.2,3. (4) Act.14. 23. (5) Act.13.2. 1 Tim.5.22. 1 Tim.4.14.

Explication.

Five things are here said to be required unto the due and solemn constitution of a Minister, Guide, Elder, Pastor, or Teacher of the Church; which as they do not all equally belong unto the *essence* of the Call, so they are all indispensably necessary unto him that would be accounted to have taken that Office upon him according to the mind of Christ, and they are plainly expressed in the Scripture.

The first is, That they be furnished with *the gifts* of the Holy Ghost, for the discharge of the Ministry. The communication of the *gifts* of the holy Ghost, is the foundation of the Ministry, as the Apostle declares, *Ephes.* 4.7,8,11,12,13. *But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto Men, and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting*

perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. And if this were not continued, if the Lord Chriſt did not continue to give *gifts* unto men for that end, the Miniſtry muſt and would ceaſe in the Church, and all Church-Order and Adminiſtrations thereon. The exerciſe alſo of theſe gifts, is required in all them that are called unto ſacred Office, 1 Tim. 4. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee.* Hence perſons deſtitute of theſe gifts of the Spirit, as they cannot in a due manner diſcharge any one duty of the Miniſtry, ſo wanting an intereſt in that which is the foundation of the Office, are not eſteemed of God, as Miniſters at all, whatever their outward call may be, *Hoſ.* 4. 6. *Becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to Me.*

Secondly, Their unblameableneſs and holineſs of converſation, is previouſly required in them that are to be ſet apart unto the Miniſtry. This the Apoſtle expreſly declares, and lays down many particular inſtances whereby it is to be tryed, Tit. 1. 7, 8, 9. *For a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the Steward of God, not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, not given*

to

to Wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *A Bishop must be blameless, the Husband of one Wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to Wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own House, having his Children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? Not a Novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil; moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil.* Not that the particulars here mentioned by the Apostle are only to be considered in the conversation of the Person to be called to the Ministry; but that in an universal holy Conversation these things he requires that he should be eminent in amongst Believers, as those which have an especial respect to his Work and Office. And a failure in any of them, is a just cause or reason to debar any

person

perſon from obtaining a part and lot in this matter. For whereas the eſpecial end of the Miniſtry is to promote and farther Faith and Holineſs in the Church, by the edification of it, how unreaſonable a thing would it be, if men ſhould be admitted unto the work of it, who in their own Perſons were ſtrangers both unto Faith and Holineſs. And herein are the Elders of the Churches ſeriouſly to exerciſe themſelves unto God, that they may be an example unto the Flock, in an univerſal labouring after conformity in their lives unto the great Biſhop and Paſtor of the Church, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Thirdly, It is required that ſuch a perſon have a *willing mind* to give up himſelf unto God in this work, 1 *Pet.* 5. 2,3. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof, not by conſtraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being Enſamples to the Flock.* Willingneſs and readineſs of mind, are the things here required as a previous qualification unto any mans ſuſception of this Office; and two things doth the Apoſtle declare to be contrary hereunto.

First, The undertaking of it by *constraint*, which compriseth every antecedent external impression upon the mind of the undertaker; such are personal outward necessities, compulsions of Friends and Relations, want of other ways of subsistence in the World; all which, and the like, are condemned by the Apostle, as bringing of some *constraint* on the mind, which on other accounts ought to be free and willing; as also all *tergiversation* and backwardness in persons duly qualified and called, on the consideration of difficulties, temptations, streights, persecutions, is here condemned.

Secondly, An eye and regard unto *filthy lucre* or profit in the World, is proposed as opposite unto the *readiness of mind* which is required in them that are called to this work. An aim in this employment for men by it to advantage themselves in the outward things of this World, without which, it is evident that the whole Work and Office would be neglected by the most of them, who now would be accounted partakers of it, is openly here condemned by the Apostle.

Fourthly, *Election* by the suffrage and consent of the Church is required unto the Calling of a Pastor or Teacher, so that without

out it formally, or virtually given or obtained, the Call however otherwiſe carried on or ſolemnized, is irregular and defective. There are but two places in the New Teſtament where there is mention of the *manner* whereby any are called in an *ordinary* way unto any Miniſtry in the Church, and in both of them there is mention of their *election* by the community of the Church; and in both of them the Apoſtles themſelves preſided with a fulneſs of Church-power, and yet would not deprive the Churches of that which was their liberty and priviledge. The firſt of theſe is *Act.*6. where all the Apoſtles together, to give a Rule unto the future proceeding of all Churches in the conſtitution of Officers amongſt them, do appoint the *multitude of the Diſciples*, or community of the Church, to look out from among themſelves, or to chooſe the perſons that were to be ſet apart thereon unto their Office, which they did accordingly, verſ.2.3, and 5. *Then the twelve called the multitude of the Diſciples unto them, and ſaid, It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the Word of God, and ſerve Tables; wherefore Brethren, look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt, and Wiſdom; and the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude, and they*

chose Stephen, &c. This was done when only *Deacons* were to be ordained, in whom the interest and concernment of the Church is not to be compared with that which it hath in its *Pastors*, *Teachers*, and *Elders*. The same is mentioned again, *Act.* 14.23. where *Paul* and *Barnabas* are said to ordain Elders in the Churches by their election and suffrage. For the word there used, will admit of no other sense, however it be ambiguously expressed in our translation. Neither can any instance be given of the use of that word, applied unto the communication of any Office or Power to any person or persons in an assembly wherein it denoteth any other act on but the suffrage of the multitude; and this it doth constantly in all Writers in the *Greek* Tongue. And hence it was that this right and priviledge of the Church, in chooſing of those who are to be set over them in the work of the Lord, was a long time preserved inviolate in the primitive Churches, as the Antients do abundantly testifie. Yea the shew and appearance of it could never be utterly thrust out of the World, but is still retained in those Churches which yet reject the thing it self. And this institution of our Lord Jesus Christ by his Apostles, is suited to the nature of the Church,

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and of the authority that he hath appointed to abide therein. For as we have ſhewed before, perſons become a Church by their own voluntary conſent. Chriſt makes his ſubjects willing, not ſlaves: His rule over them is by his grace in their own wills; and he will have them every way free in their obedience. A Church-ſtate is an eſtate of abſolute liberty under Chriſt, not for men to do what they will, but for men to do their duty freely, without compulſion. Now nothing is more contrary to this liberty, than to have their Guides, Rulers, and Overſeers, impoſed on them without their conſent. Beſides, the body of the Church is obliged to diſcharge its duty towards Chriſt, in every inſtitution of his, which herein they cannot, if they have not their free conſent in the choice of their Paſtors or Elders, but are conſidered as *mute perſons* or bruit creatures. Neither is there any other ordinary way of communicating authority unto any in the Church, but by the voluntary ſubmiſſion and ſubjection of the Church it ſelf unto them. For as all other imaginable ways may fail, and have done ſo, where they have been truſted unto, ſo they are irrational, and unſcriptural, as to their being a means of the delegation of any power whatever.

Fifthly, Unto this election succeeds the solemn *setting apart* of them that are chosen by the Church unto this Work and Ministry by fasting, prayer, and imposition of the hands of the *Presbyterie*, before constituted in the Church wherein any person is so to be set apart.

Quest.26. *May a person be called to, or be employed in a part only of the Office or Work of the Ministry*, or may he hold the relation and exercise the duty of an *Elder* or *Minister* unto more Churches than one at the same time?

Answ. Neither of these have either warrant or president in the Scripture; nor is the first of them consistent with the authority of the Ministry, nor the latter with the duty thereof, nor either of them with the nature of that relation which is between the Elders and the Church, Act.14. 23. 1Pet.5.2. Act.20.28.

Explication.

There are two parts of this Question and Answer, to be spoken unto severally. The first is concerning a person to be called or employed in any Church, in a part only of

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the Office or Work of the Miniſtry. As ſuppoſe a Man ſhould be called or choſen by the Church to adminiſter the Sacraments, but not to attend to the Work of Preaching, or unto the Rule or Guidance of the Church; or in like manner unto any other part or parcel of the work of the Miniſtry, with an exemption of other duties from his charge or care. If this be done by conſent and agreement, for any time or ſeaſon, it is unwarrantable and diſorderly; (what may be done *occaſionally* upon an emergency, or in caſe of weakneſs or diſability befalling any *Elder* as to the diſcharge of any part of his duty, is not here enquired after.) For,

Firſt, If the Perſon ſo called or employed have received gifts fitting him for the whole work of the Miniſtry, the exerciſe of them is not to be reſtrained by any conſent or agreement; ſeeing they are given for the edification of the Church to be traded withall, 1 Cor. 12. 7. *The Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*; and this, he which hath received ſuch Gifts, is bound to attend unto, and purſue.

Secondly, If he have not received ſuch Gifts as compleatly to enable him unto the diſcharge of the whole Work of the Miniſtry in the Church wherein he is to adminiſter

ſter, it is not lawful for the Church to call him unto that work wherein the Lord Chriſt hath not gone before them in qualifying him for it. Yea, to do ſo, would be moſt irregular, for the whole power of the Church conſiſts in its attendance unto the Rule given unto it. And therefore the Office and Work of the Miniſtry being conſtituted by the Law of Chriſt, it is not in the power of the Church to enlarge or ſtreighten the power or duty of any one that is called unto the Office thereof. Neither can or ought any perſon that is called unto the work of the Miniſtry to give his conſent to the reſtraint of the exerciſe of that gift that he hath received in a due and orderly manner, nor to the abridgement of the authority which the Lord Chriſt hath committed unto the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

As it is incumbent upon them to take care to preſerve their whole authority, and to diſcharge their whole duty, ſo arbitrary conſtitutions of this nature, are irregular, and would bring in confuſion into Churches.

The ſecond part of the *Queſtion* is, concerning the Relation of the ſame perſon to more Churches than one at the ſame time, and his undertaking to diſcharge the duty of his relation unto them, as an Elder or

or Miniſter. And this alſo is irregular and unwarrantable. Now a man may hold the relation of an *Elder*, *Paſtor*, or Miniſter unto more Churches than one, two ways: Firſt, *formally* and directly, by an equal formal intereſt in them, undertaking the Paſtoral Charge equally and alike of them, being called alike to them, and accepting of ſuch a Relation. (2) Virtually; when by vertue of his Relation unto one Church, he puts forth his power or authority in Miniſterial acts, in or towards another. The firſt way is unlawful, and deſtructive both of the Office and Duty of a Paſtor. For as *Elders* are ordained in, and unto the Churches reſpectively that they are to take care of, *Act.* 14.23. *Tit.* 1.5. And their Office-power conſiſts in a Relation unto the Church that they are ſet over, ſo they are commanded to attend unto the ſervice of the Churches wherein, and whereunto, they are ſo ordained, *Act.* 20.28. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. and that with all diligence, care, & watchfulneſs, as thoſe that muſt give an account, *Heb.* 13.17. which no man is able to do, towards more Churches than one, the ſame duties being at all times to be performed towards all. And becauſe the whole authority of the Elders, Paſtors, or Biſhops of Churches

Churches, is miniſterial, 1 *Cor.*4.1. conſiſting in a power of acting upon the Command of Chriſt, they are bound in their own perſons to the diſcharge of their duty and Office, without the leaſt pretence of authority to *delegate* another, or *others*, to act their part, or to do their duty, which would be an effect of *autocratorical* Authority, and not of Obedience or Miniſtry. The latter way alſo of relation unto many Churches is unwarrantable: For (1) It hath no warrant in the Scripture; no Law nor Conſtitution of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, can be produced to give it countenance; but Elders were ordained to their own Churches, and commanded to attend unto them. (2) No *Rule* is given unto any Elders, how they ſhould behave themſelves in reference unto more Churches than one, in the exerciſe of their miniſterial power, as there are Rules given unto every one for the diſcharge of that duty in the Church whereunto he is related. (3) There is no *Example* to give it countenance recorded in the Scripture. (4) The authority to be put forth, hath no foundation. (1) Not in the *Gifts* they have received; for the *miniſterial power* is not an abſolute ability or faculty of doing what a man is able, but a *right*, whereby a man hath power

power to do that rightly and *lawfully*, which before he could not do. This, Gifts will not give to any; for if they did, they would do it to all that have received them. (2) Not in their *Election*, for they are choſen in and by that Church whereunto they ſtand in eſpecial relation, whoſe choice cannot give miniſterial power over any but themſelves. (3) Not in their *ſetting apart* by Faſting, Prayer, and Impoſition of Hands, for this is only unto that Office, Work and Power, whereunto they are choſen. They are not choſen for one end, and ſet apart for another. (4) Not from the Communion of Churches, for that gives no new power, but only a due exerciſe of that which was before received.

Queſt. 27. *What are the principal duties of the Paſtors or Teachers of the Church?*

Anſ. (1) To be examples unto the Flock in Faith, Love, Knowledge, Meekneſs, Patience, with readineſs to ſuffer for the Name and Goſpel of Chriſt, with Conſtancy therein. (2) To watch for the Souls, and take care of all the ſpiritual concernments of the whole Flock committed to them. (3) To preach the Word diligently, dividing it aright. (4) To preſerve

preserve and contend for the Truth. (5) To administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel duly and orderly. (6) To stir up and exercise the Gifts they have received in the discharge of their whole Work and Administration of all Ordinances. (7) To instruct, admonish, cherish, and comfort all the Members of the Church, as their Conditions, Occasions, and Necessities do require. (8) To attend with diligence, skill, and wisdom, unto the discharge of that authority which in the rule of the Church is committed unto them. (1) 1 Tim.3.10,11,13: Chap.4.12. 2 Tim. 2.3. Col.1 24. Phil.2.17. Chap.3.17. (2) Heb.13. 17. Act.20.28. (3) 2Tim.2.15. 2Tim.4.2. Rom.12.6,7,8. (4) 1 Tim.6.20. Act. 20.28. Jude 3. (5) 1 Cor.4.1,2. 1 Tim.3.15. (6) 1 Tim.4.14,15,16. (7) Act.20.18,19,20,25, 26. 1 Thes.3.5. 2Tim.2.24,25. (8) Rom.12. 8. 1 Tim.5 17.

The answer is full and plain.

Quest.28. *Wherein principally doth the authority of the Elders of the Church consist?*

Answ. (1) In that the Rule of the Church, and the guidance thereof in things appertaining unto the Worship of God, is committed unto them. And therefore,

(2) What-

(2) Whatever they do as Elders in the Church, according unto Rule, they do it not in the name or authority of the Church by which their power is derived unto them, nor as Members only of the Church by their own consent or covenant, but in the Name and Authority of Jesus Christ, from whom by vertue of his Law and Ordinance, their Ministerial Office and Power is received; so that (3) In the exercise of any act of Church-Power, by and with the consent of the Church, there is an obligation thence proceeding, which ariseth immediatly from that authority which they have received of Jesus Christ, which is the spring of all rule and authority in the Church. (1) Act.20.28. Heb.13. 7,17. 1Pet.5.2. 1Cor.12.28. (2) 1Tim.3.5. Col 4.17. 2 Cor.10.4,8. (3) 1 Tim.4. 11. Tit.2.15. 1Pet.1.2,3,4,5.

Explication.

The answer unto this Question explains the Power or Authority of the Elders of the Church, from whom they do receive it, and how it is exercised by them; the right stating whereof is of great importance in

in the whole Diſcipline of the Church, and muſt therefore here be farther explained: to this end we may conſider,

Firſt, That all Church-power is originally veſted in Jeſus Chriſt the ſole Head and Monarch thereof. God the Father hath committed it unto him, and intruſted him with it for the accompliſhment of his work of mediation, *Mat.*28.18.

Secondly, That he doth communicate of this authority by way of truſt, to be exerciſed by them in his Name, unto perſons by him appointed, ſo much as is needful for the ordering and diſpoſing of all things in his Churches, unto the bleſſed ends for which he hath inſtituted and appointed them. For no man can have any power in his Church for any end whatſoever, but by *delegation* from him. What is not received from him, is meer uſurpation. And whoever takes upon himſelf the exerciſe of any Rule, or Authority, or Power in the Church, not granted unto them by him, or not rightly derived from him, is an Oppreſſor, a Thief, and a Robber. This neceſſarily follows upon the abſolute inveſtiture of all power in him alone, 1 *Cor.*12.28. *Epheſ.*4.11, 12.

Thirdly, The means whereby the Lord Chriſt communicates this power unto men,

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is by his *Law* and Conſtitution, whereby he hath granted, ordained and appointed, that ſuch and ſuch powers ſhall be exerciſed in his Church, and that by ſuch and ſuch perſons, to be derived unto them in ſuch a way and manner; ſo that the Word of the Goſpel, or the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Lord Chriſt therein, are the firſt recipient ſeat and ſubject *morally* of all Church-power whatever, *Matth.*16.19. *Matth.*18. 18,19,20.

Fourthly, The way and means whereby any perſons come to a participation of this power regularly, according to the mind of Chriſt, is by the obedience unto, and due obſervation of his Laws and Commands, in them unto whom they are preſcribed. As when an Office, with the power of it, is conſtituted and limited by the Law of the Land, there is no more required to inveſt any man in that Office, or to give him that power, than the due obſervance of the means and way preſcribed in the Law to that end. The way then, whereby the *Elders* of the Church do come to participate of the power and authority which Chriſt hath appointed to be exerciſed in his Church, is by their and the Churches due obſervance of the Rules and Laws given by him for their election

ction, and setting apart unto that Office, *Heb.*4.3. *Act* 14.24.

Fifthly, On this account they receive their power from Christ himself alone, and that immediately; for the means used for their participation of it, are not *recipient* of the power it self *formally*, nor do authoritatively collate or confer it, only the Laws of Christ are executed in a way of obedience. So that though they are chosen and set apart to their Office by the *Church*. yet they are made *Overseers* by the *Holy Ghost*, *Act.* 20. 28. Though they have their power *by* the Church, yet they have it not *from* the Church; nor was that power whereof they are made partakers (as was said) *formally resident* in the body of the Church, before their participation of it; but *really* in Christ himself alone, and *morally* in his Word or Law. And thence is the Rule and Guidance of the Church committed unto them by Christ, *Heb.* 13.7, 17. 1 *Pe.* 5. 2. 1 *Tim.* 3. 5.

Sixthly, This authority and power thus received from Christ, is that which they exert and put forth in all their ministerial administrations, in all which they do as Ministers in the House of God, either in his Worship, or in the Rule of the Church it self

ſelf. They exerciſe that authority of Chriſt, which he hath in his Law appointed to be exerciſed in his Church; and from that authority is due order given unto the adminiſtration of all the Ordinances of Worſhip; and an obligation unto obedience to acts of rule doth thence alſo enſue; ſo that they which deſpiſe them, deſpiſe the authority of Chriſt.

Seventhly, when as Elders they do, or declare any thing in the name of the Church, they do not, *as ſuch*, put forth any authority committed unto them from and by the Church, but only declare the *conſent* and determination of the Church in the exerciſe of their own liberty and priviledge; but the authority which they act by, and which they put forth, is that which is committed to themſelves *as ſuch* by Jeſus Chriſt.

Eightly, this authority is compriſed in the Law and conſtitution of Chriſt which themſelves exert only *miniſterially*; and therefore whenever they act any thing *authoritatively*, which they are not enabled for, or warranted in by the Word of the Goſpel, or do any thing without, or contrary unto rule, all ſuch actings as to any ſpiritual effect of the Goſpel, or obligation on the conſciences of Men, are *Ipſo facto*

 null,

null, and are no way ratified in Heaven, where all their orderly actings are made valid; that is, by Christ himself in his Word.

Ninthly, The reason therefore why the *consent* of the Church is required unto the *authoritative* acting of the Elders therein, is not because from thence any *authority* doth accrue unto them anew, which virtually and radically they had not before; but because by the rule of the Gospel this is required to the orderly acting of their power, which without it would be contrary to rule, and therefore ineffectual; as also it must needs be from the nature of the thing it self; for no act can take place in the Church without or against its own consent, whilest its obedience is voluntary and of choice.

But if it be asked, what then shall the Elders do, in case the Church refuse to consent unto such acts as are indeed according to rule, and warranted by the institution of Christ? it is answered, that they are First diligently to *instruct* them from the Word in their duty, making known the minde of Christ unto them in the matter under consideration. (2) To declare unto them the *danger* of their dissent in obstruct-

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ing the edification of the Body, to the diſhonour of the Lord Chriſt, and their own ſpiritual diſadvantage. (3) To *wait patiently* for the concurrence of the grace of God with their Miniſtry, in giving light and obedience unto the Church; and (4) In caſe of the Churches continuance in any failure of duty, to ſeek for advice and *counſel* from the Elders and Brethren of other Churches, all which particulars might be enlarged, would the nature of our preſent deſign and work permit it.

Queſt. 29. *What is the duty of the Church towards their Elders, Paſtors, or Teachers?*

Anſw. (1) To have them in reverence and honour for their office and works ſake. (2) To obey them conſcientiouſly in all things wherein they ſpeak unto them in the name of the Lord. (2) To pray earneſtly for them, that they may, and to exhort them, if need require, to fulfill the work of the Miniſtry. (4) To communicate unto them of their temporals for their comfortable ſubſiſtance in the World, and uſefulneſs unto others. (5) Wiſely to order things by their direction, ſo as that they may be amongſt them without fear. (6) To abide with,

and ſtand by them, in their ſufferings for the Goſpel, and ſervice of Chriſt among them. (1) 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5. 17. (2) Heb. 13. 17. 1 Cor. 16. 16. (3) Epheſ. 6. 18, 19. Coloſſ. 4. 3. 2 Theſſ. 3. 1. Coloſſ. 4. 17. (4) Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 14 (5) 1 Cor. 16. 10. (6) 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17, 18. 2 Tim. 4. 16.

Queſt. 30. *Are there any differences in the Office, or Offices, of the Guides, Rulers, Elders or Miniſters of the Church?*

Anſw. The Office of them that are Teachers, is one and the ſame among them all; but where there are many in the ſame Church, it is the will of Chriſt that they ſhould be peculiarly aſſigned unto ſuch eſpecial work in the diſcharge of their office power, as their gifts received from him do peculiarly fit them for, and the neceſſities of the Church require. Rom. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 8. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 10. Chap. 5 2.

Explication.

The *Office* of them that are to inſtruct the Church in the name and authority of Chriſt, is one and the ſame, as hath been ſhewed

ſhewed before. And there are many names that are equally accommodated unto all that are partakers of it, as Elders, Biſhops, Guides; They are all alike Elders, alike Biſhops, alike Guides, have the one office in common amongſt them, and every one the whole intire unto himſelf. But there are names alſo given unto them, whereby they are diſtinguiſht, not as to Office, but as to their work and employment in the diſcharge of that Office: ſuch are *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, Epheſ. 4. 11. Which are placed as diſtinct perſons in their work, partakers of the ſame Office. Now the foundation of this diſtinction and difference lyes.

Firſt, In the different gifts that they have received; For although it be required in them all, that they have received all thoſe gifts, abilities, and qualifications which are neceſſary for the work of the Miniſtry, yet as to the degrees of their participation of their gifts, ſome may more excell in one, others in another, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. *There are diverſities of gifts; but the ſame Spirit, and there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord: and there are diverſities of Operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh all in all.*

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wiſdom, to another the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit, &c. and all theſe gifts are beſtowed upon them to be exerciſed and laid out, for the profit and benefit of the Church; *Verſe* the 7. *The manifeſtation of the ſpirit is given to every man to profit withall.* And therefore every one is in an eſpecial manner to attend unto the exerciſe and uſe of that gift wherein he doth excell; or which tends moſt to the edification of the Church; every man being to miniſter according as he hath received, 1 *Pet.* 4. 10.

Secondly, It lyes in the nature of the work of the Miniſtry in the Church, which in general may be referred unto two heads or ends.

Firſt, The *inſtruction* of it in the knowledge of God in Chriſt, and the myſteries of the Goſpel, that it might grow in grace, wiſdom, ſaving light, and knowledge.

Secondly, The *exhortation* of it to walk anſwerable unto light received, in holineſs, and univerſal obedience. Now though theſe ſeveral ends of the Miniſtry cannot be divided or ſeparated, yet they may be diſtinguiſhed, and ſo carryed on diſtinctly, that in the one, knowledge or light may be

firſtly

firſtly and principally intended, ſo as to lead unto obedience; in the other, holineſs may be firſtly deſigned, as ſpringing from Goſpel light or knowledge. Hence therefore are the Elders of the Church principally to attend unto their work or that end of the Miniſtry, which by the Holy Ghoſt they are moſt ſuited unto. And therefore the Church following the intimations of the Holy-Ghoſt, in communicating his gifts in variety as he pleaſeth, and attending their own edification, may and ought amongſt thoſe whom they chooſe to the Office of Elders or Miniſters, withall deſign them in particular unto that eſpecial work which they are eſpecially fitted and prepared for; and this upon their being choſen, and ſet apart, they are accordingly to attend unto: *He that teacheth on teaching, he that exhorteth on exhortation*; Rom. 12. 7, 8. Their Office then is the ſame, but their teaching, work, and employment on the grounds mentioned, diſtinct and different.

Queſt. 31. *Are there appointed any Elders in the Church, whoſe office and duty conſiſt in rule and government only?*

Answ. Elders not called to teach ordinarily, or administer the Sacraments, but to assist and help in the rule and government of the Church, are mentioned in the Scripture. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

Explication.

This Office of *Ruling Elders* in the Church, is much opposed by some, and in especial by them who have least reason so to do. For first, They object against them, that they are *lay-Elders*, when those with whom they have to do, deny that distinction of the Church into the *Clergy* and Layity. For although they allow the distribution of it, into *Officers*, and the *multitude of the Brethren*, yet they maintain that the whole Church is *Gods Clergy*, his lot, and portion, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. Again, they affirm them to be *Elders*, and therein not meerly of the members of the Church, but Officers set apart unto their Office according to rule, or the appointment of Christ. And if by *Layity*, the People distinct from the Officers of the Church are to be understood, the very term of a *lay Elder* implyes a contradiction, as designing one, who

who *is*, and *is not*, a Church-Officer. Beſides, themſelves do principally govern the Church by ſuch whom they eſteem *Laymen*, as not in holy-Orders; to whom the principal part of its rule, at leaſt in the execution of it is committed, which renders their objection to this ſort of Church-Officers unreaſonable. Others alſo have given advantage by making this Office *annual*, or *biennial*, in them that are choſen unto it; which though they plead the *neceſſity* of their Churches for, as not having Perſons meet for this work and duty, who are willing to undertake it conſtantly during their lives, without ſuch a contribution for their maintenance as they are not able to afford, yet the wiſeſt of them do acknowledge an irregularity in what they do, and wiſh it remedied. But this hinders not, but that ſuch Church-Officers are indeed deſigned in the Scripture, and of whom frequent mention is made in the ancient Writers, and footſteps alſo, yet remain in moſt Churches of their inſtitution, though woſully corrupted. For beſides, that ſome light in this matter may be taken from the Church of the *Jews*, wherein the *Elders* of the *People*, were joyned in Rule with the *Prieſts*, both in the *Sanhedrim*, and all

leſſer

leſſer Aſſemblies; there is in the Goſpel expreſs mention of perſons that were aſſigned peculiarly for Rule and Government in the Church, as 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. And it is in vain pretended that thoſe words, *helps*, *governments*, do denote *gifts* only, ſeeing the Apoſtle expreſly enumerates the *perſons* in Office, or *Officers*, which the Lord Chriſt then uſed in the foundation, and Rule of the Churches as then planted. He that *ruleth*, alſo is diſtinguiſht from him that *teacheth*, and him that *exhorteth*, Rom. 12. 8. and is preſcribed *diligence*, as his principal qualification in the diſcharge of his duty. And the words of the Apoſtle to this purpoſe, are *expreſs*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially thoſe who labour in the word and doctrine.* For the words expreſly aſſign two ſorts of Elders, whereof ſome only attend unto rule; others moreover labour in the Word and Doctrine. Neither doth that word, as ſome would have it, *labour in the Word*, intend any other labour but what is incumbent on all the Paſtors and Teachers of the Church as their conſtant duty; ſee *Rom.* 6. 12. *Acts* 20. 35. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12. Now can we ſuppoſe that the Apoſtle would affirm them to be worthy

of

of double honour, whom comparing with others, he notes as *remiſs* and *negligent* in their work. For it ſeems that others were more diligent in the diſcharge of that duty, which was no leſs theirs, if only one ſort of Elders be here intended. The Scripture is not wont to *command* ſuch perſons as worthy of *double honour*, but rather to propoſe them as meet for double ſhame and puniſhment, *Jer.* 48. 10. 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. And they are unmindefull of their own intereſt, who would have *Biſhops* that attend to the rule of the Church, to be diſtinctly intended by the *Elders that rule* well; ſeeing the Apoſtle expreſly preferreth before and above them, thoſe that attend conſtantly to the Word and Doctrine. And beſides what is thus expreſly ſpoken concerning the appointment of this ſort of Elders in the Church, their *uſefulneſs* in the neceſſity of their work, and employment, is evident. For whereas a conſtant care in the Church, that the converſation of all the members of it be ſuch as becometh the Goſpel, that the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be not evil ſpoken of, is of great concernment and importance, and the *Paſtors* and Teachers, being to give up themſelves continually unto *prayer, and the Miniſtry of the word*, cannot

not attend unto the conſtant and dail
overſight thereof, the uſefulneſs of thes
Elders, whoſe proper and peculiar work i
is to have regard unto the holy walking o
the Church, muſt needs be manifeſt unto al
But whereas in moſt Churches, there is littl
or no regard unto the *perſonal holineſs* o
the members of them, it is no wonder tha
no account ſhould be had of them who ar
ordained by the Lord Chriſt to look afte
it and promote it.

The qualifications of theſe *Elders*, wit
the way of their call and ſetting apart unt
their Office, being the ſame with thoſe o
the *Teaching Elders* before inſiſted on, nee
not be here again repeated. Their autho
rity alſo in the whole rule of the Church
is every way the ſame with that of th
other ſort of Elders, and they are to a
in the excution of it with equal reſpe
and regard from the Church. Yea the bu
ſineſs of *rule*, being peculiarly committe
unto them, and they required to attend
thereunto with *diligence* in an eſpecia
manner, the work thereof is principall
theirs; as that of *labouring in the word an
doctrine* doth eſpecially belong unto the Pa
ſtors and Teachers of the Churches. An
this Inſtitution is abuſed, when either un
mee

meet perſons are called to this Office, or hoſe that are called, do not attend unto heir duty with *diligence*, or do act only in by the guidance of the Teaching Officers, without a ſenſe of their own authority, or ue reſpect from the Church.

Queſt. 32. *Is there no other ordinary Office in the Church, but only that of Elders?*
Anſw. Yes of Deacons alſo.

Queſt. 33. *What are the Deacons of the Church?*
Anſw. Approved men, Choſen by the Church to take care for the neceſſities of the poor belonging thereunto, and other outward occaſions of the whole Church, by the collection, keeping, and diſtribution of the Alms, and other ſupplyes of the Church, ſet apart and commended to the grace of God therein, by Prayer. Acts 6.3, 5, 6. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Explication.

The Office of the *Deacon*, the nature, end, and uſe of it, the qualification of the perſons to be admitted unto it, the way and

and manner of their Election and ſettin
apart; are all of them plainly expreſſed i
the Scripture, Acts 6. 1, 2, 3. *There aroſe
murmuring of the Grecians againſt the He
brews, becauſe the Widdows were neglecte
in the daily miniſtration; then the Twelv
called the multitude of the Diſciples un
them, and ſaid, it is not reaſon that we ſhou
leave the Word of God, and ſerve Table
wherefore Brethren, look ye out among y
ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Hol
Ghoſt, and wiſdom, whom we may appoi
over this buſineſs, and the ſaying pleaſed t
whole multitude, and they choſe* Stephen
&c. *whom they ſet before the Apoſtles, a
when they had prayed, they laid their han
on them.* 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1
*Likewiſe muſt the Deacons be grave, n
double-tongued, not given to much Win
not given to filthy lucre, holding the myſ
ry of the Faith in a pure Conſcience; a
let theſe alſo firſt be proved, then l
them uſe the Office of a Deacon, being fou
blameleſs; the Husbands of one Wife, rulin
their Children, and their own houſe wel
for they that have uſed the Office of a Dea
well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, a
great boldneſs in the Faith which is in Chr
Jeſus.* Theſe things are thus plain and e
pre

preſs in the Scripture. But whereas many have grown weary of the obſervation of the inſtitutions of the Goſpel, this Office hath for a long time been loſt amongſt the moſt of Chriſtians. By ſome the name is retained, but applyed to another work, duty, and employment than this to which it is peculiarly appropriated in the Scripture. Their proper and original work of taking care for the poor, they ſay, is provided for by others; and therefore that *office* being needleſs, another, unto another purpoſe, under the ſame name, is erected. Such are Deacons that may *read Service*, *Preach* and Baptiſe, when they have licenſe thereunto. But this choice, to reject an Office of the appointment of Chriſt, under pretence of proviſion made for the duties of it another way, and the erecting of one not appointed by him, ſeems not equall. But whereas it is our duty in all things to have regard to the authority of Chriſt and his appointments in the Goſpel, if we claim the priviledge of being called after his name, ſome think that if what he hath appointed may be colourably performed another way without reſpect unto his Inſtitutions, that is far the beſt. But omitting the practice of other Men, the things that con-

concern this Office in the Church, are as was said, clear in the Scripture.

First, The persons called unto it are to be of *honest report*, furnished with the gifts of the Holy-Ghost, especially with *wisdom*, Acts 6. 3. And those other endowments usefull in the discharge of their duty mentioned, 1 *Tim.* 3. 8.

Secondly, The way whereby they come to be made partakers of this Office, is by the choice or *election* of the Church, *Act.* 6. 2, 3, 5. whereupon they are solemnly to be set apart by Prayer.

Thirdly, Their work or duty consists in a daily ministration unto the necessities of the poor *Saints*, or Members of the Church *Vers.* 1, 2.

Fourthly, To this end that they may be enabled so to do, it is ordained, that every *first day* the Members of the Church do contribute according as God enables them of their substance, for the supply of the wants of the poor, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. And also *occasionally*, as necessity shall require, or God move their hearts by his grace.

Fifthly, Hereunto is to be added whatsoever by the Providence of God may be conferred upon the Church for its own

ward advantage, with reference unto the end mentioned, *Acts* 4. 34, 35.

Sixthly, Theſe ſupplyes of the Church being committed to the care and charge of the *Deacons*, they are from thence to miniſter with *diligence* and *wiſdom* unto the neceſſities of the poor; that ſo the needy may be ſupplyed, that there may be none that lack; the *rich* may contribute of their riches according to the mind of Chriſt, and in obedience unto his command, that they which miniſter well in this office, may purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and boldneſs in the faith, and that in all, the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified with praiſe and thankſgiving.

It belongs therefore unto Perſons called unto this Office,

Firſt, To acquaint themſelves with the *outward condition* of thoſe that appear to be poor and needy in the Church, whether by the addreſſes of ſuch poor ones, who are bound to make known their wants, occaſions, and neceſſities unto them, or by the information of others or their own obſervation.

Secondly, to acquaint the Elders and the Church as occaſion requireth with the neceſſities of the poor under their care, that

those who are able may be stirred up by the Elders, to a free supply and contribution.

Thirdly, To dispose what they are entrusted with *faithfully*, cheerfully, tenderly, without *partiality* or preferring one before another, for any outward respect whatever.

Fourthly, To keep and give an account unto the Church when called for, of what they have received, and how they have disposed of it, that so they may be known to have well discharged their Office; that is with care, wisdom and tenderness, whereby they procure to themselves a good degree with boldness in the Faith, and the Church is encouraged to entrust them further with this sacrifice of their Alms, which is so acceptable unto God.

Quest. 24. *Wherein consists the general duty of the whole Church, and every member thereof in their proper station and condition?*

Answ. In performing, doing, and keeping inviolate all the commands and institutions of Jesus Christ, walking unblameably and fruitfully in the World, holding forth the Word of truth, and glorifying the Lord Christ in and by the profession of his name, and keeping his testi-

testimony unto the end. Matth. 28. 20. Acts 2. 42. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Chap. 4. 8, 9. 1 Thess. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Heb. 10. 23.

Explication.

Besides the general duties of Christianity incumbent on all Believers, or Disciples of Christ as such, there are sundry especial duties required of them as *gathered* into Church Societies, upon the account of an especial trust committed unto them in that state and condition; For,

First, The Church being appointed as the *seat* and subject of all the institutions of Christ, and ordinances of Gospel-worship, it is its duty, that is, of the whole body and every member in his proper place, to use all care, watchfulness and diligence, that all the commands of Christ be kept inviolate, and all his institutions observed, according to his mind and will. Thus those *added to the Church*, *Acts* 2. 42. Together with the whole Church, *continued stedfastly* (which argues care, circumspection and diligence) *in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread and Prayers*; Which principal duties are enumerated,

to expreſs their reſpect towards all. This is their *ſtanding faſt in the Lord*, which was a matter of ſuch joy to the Apoſtle when he found it in the *Theſſalonians*; 1 Ep. 3. 8. *For now we live if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord.* That *order* and ſtedfaſtneſs which he rejoyced over in the *Coloſſians*; Chap. 2. 5. *For though I am abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt.* And where this duty is deſpiſed, men contenting themſelves with what is done by others, there is a great neglect of that *faithfulneſs* in obedience which the Church owes unto Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, the *Glory* of the Lord Chriſt, and the doctrine of the Goſpel to be manifeſted in, and by the power of an holy exemplary converſation, is committed unto the Church and all the members of it. This is one end wherefore the Lord Chriſt calls them out of the World, ſeparates them to be a peculiar people unto himſelf, brings them forth unto a viſible profeſſion, and puts his name upon them, namely that in their walking, and converſation, he may ſhew forth the holineſs of his doctrine, and power of his ſpirit, grace, and example to

effect

effect in them all holineſs, godlineſs, righteouſneſs and honeſty in the World. Hence are they earneſtly exhorted unto theſe things. Phil. 4. 8, 9. *Brethren whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things*; and that to this end, that the doctrine of the Goſpel may be adorned and Chriſt glorified in all things; *Tit.* 2. 10. And thoſe who fail herein are ſaid to be *Enemies of the croſs of Chriſt*; Phil. 3. 18; As hindring the progreſs of the doctrine thereof, by repreſenting it undeſirable in their converſation. This alſo therefore, even the duty of univerſal holineſs, with an eſpecial regard unto the honour of Chriſt, and the Goſpel which they are called and deſigned to teſtifie and expreſs in the World, is incumbent on the Church, and every member of it; namely as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *that they be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebukes in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom they are to ſhine as lights in the World*, Phil. 2. 15.

Thirdly, the care of *declaring* and manifesting the *truth* is also committed unto them. Christ hath made the Church to be the *pillar and ground of truth*. 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. where the truth of the Gospel is to be firmly *seated*, founded, fixed, established, and then *lifted up* in the wayes of Christs appointment to be seen, discerned, and known by others. And as this is done *principally* in the preaching of the Gospel by the *Elders* of the Church, and in their contending for the Truth once delivered unto the Saints, *Jude* 3. So it is also the duty of the whole Church, *to hold forth the word of life*, Phil. 2. 16. by ministring of the gift that *every man* hath received; 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. In the way of Christs appointment. In these, and the like instances, doth our Lord Jesus require of his Church that they express in the World their subjection unto him, and his authority; and that they abide therein unto the end, against all opposition whatever.

The sinful neglect of Churches in the discharge of their duty herein, was one great means of that *Apostacy* from the rule of the Gospel which they generally of old fell into. When the members of them began to think that they had no advantage by the

ſtate and condition, but only the outward participation of ſome Ordinances of Worſhip, and no duty incumbent on them, but only to attend and follow the motions and actings of their Guides, the whole Societies quickly became corrupt, and fit to be diſpoſed of according to the carnal intereſt of thoſe that had by their neglect and ſin, gotten dominion over them. And at all times, as the *people* were negligent in their duty, the *Leaders* of them were apt to uſurp undue authority. When the one ſort will not do that which they ought, the other are ready to take upon them what they ought not. It is a circumſpect performance of duty on all hands alone, that will keep all ſorts of perſons in the Church within thoſe bounds, and limits, and up to thoſe rights, and priviledges, which Chriſt hath allotted and granted unto them. And herein alone doth the order, honour, and beauty of the Church conſiſt. Church-members therefore are to *ſearch* and enquire after the particular duties, which *as ſuch*, are incumbent on them; as alſo to conſider what influence their ſpecial ſtate and condition as they are Church-members, ought to have into all the duties of their obedience as they are Chriſtians.

For this priviledge is granted unto them for their *edification*, that is their fartherance in their whole course of walking before God. And if this be neglected, if they content themselves with a *name to live* in this or that Church, to partake of the Ordinances that are stated and solemnly administred only, that which would have been to their advantage, may prove to be a snare and temptation unto them. What these especial duties are in the particular instances of them, is of too large a consideration here to be insisted on. Besides it is the great duty of the Guides of the Church, to be inculcating of them into the minds of those committed to their charge: For the Churches due performance of its duty, is their honour, Crown, and reward.

Qu. 35. *Whence do you reckon prayer, which is a part of moral and natural worship, among the institutions of Christ in his Church?*

An. On many accounts; as (1) because the Lord Christ hath commanded his Church to attend unto the worship of God therein. (2) because he bestows on the Ministers of the Church, gifts and ability of prayer for the benefit and edification thereof.

thereof. (3) he hath appointed that all his other ordinances should be administred with prayer, whereby it becomes a part of them. (4) because himself ministers in the holy place, as the great High-Priest of his Church to present their prayers unto God at the throne of grace. (5) because in all the prayers of the Church, there is an especial regard had unto himself, and the whole work of his mediation. (1) Luke 18.1. Chap.21 36. Rom.12.5. 1 Tim. 2.1, 2. (2) Eph.4.8,12,13. Rom. 8.15,16. Gal. 4.6. (3) Acts 2 42. 1 Tim. 4. 5. (4) Rev. 8. 3, 4. Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. Chap.6.20. Chap. 10. 20, 21, 22. (5) Job. 14. 13. Chap. 15. 16, 22, 26. Eph. 3. 14, 15.

Qu. 36. *May not the Church in the solemn worship of God, and celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel, make use of, and content it self in the use of forms of prayer in an unknown tongue composed by others and prescribed unto them.*

An. So to do would be; (1) contrary to one principal end of prayer it self, which is that Believers may therein apply themselves to the throne of spiritual grace for supplies according to the present condition, wants, and exigencies of their souls. (2) to the

main

main end that the Lord Jesus Christ aimed at in supplying men with gifts for the discharge of the work of the Ministry, tending to render the promise of sending the Holy Ghost, which is the immediate cause of the Churches preservation and continuance, needless, and useless. Moreover (3) It will render the discharge of the duty of Ministers unto several precepts and exhortations of the Gospel, for the use, stirring up and exercise of their gifts impossible, and (4) thereby hinder the edification of the Church, the great end of all Ordinances and Institutions. (1) Rom. 8. 26. Phil. 4. 6. Heb 4. 16. 1 Pet. 4. 7. (2) Ephes. 4. 8, 12, 13. (3) 1 Tim. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 6, 7. Colos. 4. 17. Matth. 25. 14, 15, 16. (4) 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Quest. 37. *Is the constant work of Preaching the Gospel by the Elders of the Church, necessary?*

Answ. It is so, both on the part of the Elders or Ministers themselves, of whom that duty is strictly required, and who principally therein labour and watch for the good of the flock; and on the part of the Church, for the furtherance of their faith, and obedience, by instruction, re-

proof

proof, exhortation, and conſolation. Matth. 24. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51. Rom. 12. 7, 8. 1 Cor. 9. 17, 18. Epheſ. 4. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. Chap. 5 17. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Chap. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17. Chapter 4. 2.

Queſt. 38. *Who are the proper ſubjects of Baptiſm?*

Anſw. Profeſſing Believers, if not baptiſed in their infancy, and their Infant ſeed. Matth, 28. 19. Acts 2. 38, 39. Acts 16. 33. 1 Cor. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Coloſſ. 2. 12, 13. With *Geneſis* 17. 10, 11, 12.

Queſt. 39. *Where, and to whom, is the Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be adminiſtred?*

Anſw. In the Church, or Aſſembly of the congregation, to all the Members of it, rightly prepared, and duly aſſembled, or to ſuch of them as are ſo aſſembled. 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 33. Acts 2. 46.

Queſt. 40. *How often is that Ordinance to be adminiſtred?*

Anſw. Every Firſt day of the week, or at leaſt as often as opportunity, and conveniency may be obtained. 1 Cor. 11. 26. Acts 20. 7.

Queſt.

Quest. 41. *What is the Discipline of the Church.*

Answ. It consists in the due exercise of that authority and power which the Lord Christ in and by his Word hath granted unto the Church, for its continuance, increase, and preservation, in purity, order, and holiness according to his appointment, Matth. 16. 19. Rom. 12, 8. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6. Rev. 2. 2, 20.

Explication.

Sundry things are to be considered about this discipline of the Church; as

First, The *foundation* of it, which is a grant of power and authority made unto it by Jesus Christ, as Mediator, Head, King, and Law-giver of his Church. For all *discipline* being an act of power, and this being exercised in and about things internal, and spiritual, no men can of themselves, or by grant of any others, have any right or authority to, or in the exercise thereof. Whoever hath any interest herein, or right hereunto, it must be granted unto him from above, by Jesus Christ, and that as Mediator and head of his Church. For as all Church

Church power, is in an eſpecial manner by the authority and grant of the Father veſted in him alone, *Matth.* 28. 18. *Epheſ.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. So the *nature* of it which is *ſpiritual*, the *object* of it which are the Conſciences and Goſpel priviledges of Believers, with the *ends* of it, namely the glory of God in Chriſt, with the ſpiritual and eternal good of the ſouls of men, do all manifeſt that it can have no other right nor foundation. This in the firſt place is to be fixed, that no authority can be exerciſed in the Church, but what is derived from Jeſus Chriſt, as was ſpoken before.

Secondly, The *means* whereby the Lord Chriſt doth communicate this power and authority unto his Church, is his *word* or his *law* and conſtitution concerning it in the Goſpel; ſo that it is exactly limited and bounded thereby. And no power or authority can be exerciſed in the Church, but what is granted and conveyed unto it by the word; ſeeing that Chriſt communicates no power or authority any other wayes. What ever of that nature is beſide it, or beyond it, is meer uſurpation, and *null* in its exerciſe. Herein is the commiſſion of the Guides and Rules of the Church, expreſſed, which they are not to exceed in any

any thing. Herein are bounds and limits fixed to the actings of the whole Church, and of every part and member of it.

Thirdly, This power or authority, thus granted, and conveyed by Jesus Christ, is to be exercised as to the *manner* of the administration of discipline, with *skill and diligence*, Rom. 12. 6. 1 Cor. 12. and the skill required hereunto, is a gift, or an ability of minde bestowed by the Holy Ghost upon men to put in execution the Laws of Christ, for the government of the Church, in the way and order by him appointed; or a *spiritual wisdom* whereby men know how to behave themselves in the House of God, in their several places, for its due edification in faith and love, 1 Tim. 3. 15. And this ability of minde to make due application of the Laws of the Gospel unto persons, times, and actions with their circumstances, is such a gift of the Holy Ghost, as whereof there are several degrees answering to the distinct duties that are incumbent on the *Rulers* of the Church on the one hand, and *Members* on the other. And where this skill and wisdom is wanting, there it is impossible that the *Discipline* of the Church, should be preserved or carryed on. Hereunto also diligence and watchfulnes

fulneſs are to be added, without which ability and power will never obtain their proper end in a due manner, *Rom.* 12.6,7,8.

Fourthly, the *end* of this *diſcipline* is the continuance, increaſe, and preſervation of the Church, according to the rule of its firſt inſtitution, 1 *Cor.* 5.7. This power, hath Chriſt given his Church, for its conſervation, without which it muſt neceſſarily decay, and come to nothing. Nor is it to be imagined that where any Church is called and gathered according to the minde of Chriſt, that he hath left it deſtitute of power and authority to preſerve it ſelf, in that ſtate and order which he hath appointed unto it. And that which was one principal cauſe of the decayes of the *Aſian* Churches, was the neglect of this *Diſcipline*, the power and priviledge whereof, the Lord had left unto them and intruſted them withall, for their own preſervation in order, purity and holineſs. And therefore for the neglect thereof they were greatly blamed by him. *Rev.* 2. 14, 15,20. *Chap.* 3. 2. as is alſo the Church of *Corinth* by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 5.2. as they are commended, who attended unto the diligent exerciſe of it, *Revel.* 2. 2. *Chap.* 3. 9. The diſuſe alſo of it, hath been the occaſion

of

of all the defilements, abominations and confuſions, that have ſpread themſelves over many Churches in the World.

Queſt. 42. *Unto whom is the power and adminiſtration of this Diſcipline committed by Jeſus Chriſt?*

Anſw. As to the authority to be exerted in it in the things wherein the whole Church is concerned, unto the Elders; as unto tryall, judgement and conſent in and unto its exerciſe unto the whole Brotherhood; as unto love, care, and watchfulneſs in private and particular caſes, to every member of the Church. Mat. 24. 45. Epheſ. 4. 13, 14. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 5. Chap. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Per. 2. 3. 1 Theſ. 5. 12. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 4. 14. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Explication.

It hath been ſhewed that this power is granted unto the Church by virtue of the *Law* and conſtitution of Chriſt. Now the Law aſſigns the means and way whereby any perſons do obtain an intereſt therein and makes the juſt allotments to all concerned in it. What this Law, Conſtitution

or Word of Chriſt aſſigns unto any, *as ſuch*, that they are the *firſt ſeat* and ſubject of, by what way or means ſoever they come to be intruſted therein. Thus that power or authority which is given unto the Elders of the Church, doth not firſt *formally* reſide in the body of the Church unorganized or diſtinct from them, though they are called unto their Office by their ſuffrage and choice; but they are themſelves as ſuch, the firſt ſubject of Office-power; For ſo is the Will of the Lord Chriſt. Nor is the intereſt of the whole Church in this power of diſcipline whatever it be, given unto it by the Elders, but is immediately granted unto it, by the will and Law of the Lord Jeſus.

Firſt, In this way and manner the Authority above deſcribed, is given in the firſt place, as ſuch, unto the *Elders* of the Church. This authority was before explained, in anſwer unto the 28th Queſtion, as alſo was the way whereby they receive it. And it is that power of office whereby they are enabled for the diſcharge of their whole duty, in the teaching, and ruling of the Church, called the *power of the keyes*, from *Mat.* 16. 19. Which expreſſion being *Metaphorical*, and in general lyable unto many

interpretations, is to be underſtood according to the declaration made of it in thoſe particular inſtances wherein it is expreſſed. Nor is it a twofold power or Authority that the Elders of the Church have committed unto them; one to teach, and another to rule, commonly called the power of order, and of juriſdiction; but it is *one power of Office*, the duties whereof are of ſeveral kinds, referred unto the two general heads, firſt of *teaching* by preaching the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, and (2) Of *rule* or government. By virtue hereof, are they made *Rulers* over the houſe of God, *Matth.* 24. 45. *Stewards* in his houſe, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Overſeers* of the Church, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. *Guides* unto the Church, *Heb.* 13. 7, 17. Not that they have a ſupream or *autocratorical* power committed unto them, to enable them to do what ſeems right and good in their own eyes, ſeeing they are expreſly bound up unto the terms of their Commiſſion, Matth. 28. 19, 20. *To teach men to do and obſerve all, and only what Chriſt hath commanded*; nor have they by virtue of it, any dominion in, or over the Church, that is, the laws, rules or priviledges of it, or the conſciences of the Diſciples of Chriſt, to

alter,

alter, change, add, diminiſh, or binde by their own authority, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. *Mark* 10. 42, 43, 44. But it is a power meerly *miniſterial*, in whoſe exerciſe they are unto the Lord Chriſt accountable *ſervants*, Heb. 13. 17. Matth. 24. 45. And Servants of the Church for Jeſus ſake, 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. This authority in the Diſcipline of the Church they exert and put forth by virtue of their Office; and not either as declaring of the power of the Church it ſelf, or acting what is delegated unto them thereby, but as miniſterially exerciſing the authority of Chriſt committed unto themſelves.

Secondly, The body of the Church, or the multitude of the Brethren, (women being excepted by eſpecial prohibition, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34, 35. 1 *Tim.* 2. 11, 12.) Is by the Law and conſtitution of Chriſt in the Goſpel, intereſted in the adminiſtration of this power of diſcipline in the Church, ſo far as,

Firſt, To conſider, try, and make a judgement, in and about all perſons, things, and cauſes, in reference whereunto it is to be exerciſed. Thus the *Brethren* at *Jeruſalem* joyned in the conſideration of the obſervation of *Moſaical ceremonies* with the Apoſtles and Elders, *Act.* 15. 23. And the *multitude* of them to whom letters were

sent about it, likewise did the same, *Verse* the 30, 31, 32. And this they thought it their duty and concernment to do, *Chap.* 21, 22. And they are blamed, who applyed not themselves unto this duty, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 6. Thence are the Epistles of *Paul* to the Churches to instruct them in their duties, and priviledges in Christ, and how they ought to behave themselves in the ordering of all things amongst them according to his minde. And these are directed unto the Churches themselves, either joyntly with their Elders, or distinctly from them, *Phil.* 1. 1. And the whole preservation of Church-order, is on the account of this duty recommended unto them. Neither can what they do in complyance with their Guides and Rulers, be any part of their obedience unto the Lord Christ, unless they make previously thereunto a rational consideration and judgement by the rule, of what is to be done. Neither is the Church of Christ to be ruled without its knowledge, or against its will; nor in any thing is blinde obedience acceptable to God.

Secondly, The *Brethren* of the Church are intrusted with the priviledge of giving and testifying their consent unto all acts

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of Church power, which though it belong not *formally* unto the authority of them, it is necessary unto their validity and efficacy; and that so far forth as that they are said to *do* and *act* what is done and effected thereby, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 13. 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7, 8. And they who have this priviledge of *consent* which hath so great an influence into the action and validity of it, have also the liberty of dissent; when any thing is proposed to be done, the *warrant* whereof from the Word and the *rule* of its performance, is not evident unto them.

Qu. 43. *Wherein doth the exercise of the authority for Discipline committed unto the Elders of the Church consist?*

Ans. (1) In personal private admonition of any member or members of the Church, in case of sin, errour, or any miscarriage known unto themselves. (2) In publick admonition, in case of offences persisted in and brought orderly to the knowledge and consideration of the Church. (3.) In the ejection of obstinate offenders from the society and communion of the Church. (4) In exhorting, comforting, and restoring to the enjoyment and exercise of Church-

priviledges such as are recovered from the error of their wayes; all according to the lawes, rules, and directions of the Gospel. (1) Matth. 18. 15. 1 Thess. 5.14. 1 Cor. 4. 14. Titus 1. 13. Chap. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. (2) 1 Tim. 5.19, 20. Matth. 18. 16, 17. (3) Titus 3. 10. 1 Tim. 1.20. Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5. Gal. 5. 12. (4) 2 Cor. 2. 7. Gal. 6. 1. 2 Thess. 3.15.

Q. 44. *May the Church cast any Person out of its communion without previous admonition?*

Ans. It may in some cases, where the offence is notorious, and the scandal grievous, so that nothing be done against other general rules. 1 Cor. 4.

Qu. 45. *Wherein doth the liberty and duty of the whole Brotherhood in the exercise of Discipline in the Church in particular consist?*

An. (1.) In a meek consideration of the condition and temptations of offenders, with the nature of their offences, when orderly proposed unto the Church. (2.) In judging with the Elders according to rule, what in all cases of offence is necessary to be done, for the good of the offen-

offenders themselves, and for the edification and vindication of the whole Church. (3) In their consent unto, and concurrence in the admonition ejection, pardoning and restoring of offenders, as the matter shall require. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5, 12. 1 Cor. 6. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Qu. 46. *What is the duty of private Members in reference unto the discipline appointed by Christ in his Church?*

An. It is their duty in their mutual watch over one another, to exhort each other unto holiness and perseverance; and if they observe any thing in the wayes and walkings of any of their fellow Members not according unto the rule, and the duty of their profession, which therefore gives them offence, to admonish them thereof in private with love, meekness and wisdom, and in case they prevail not unto their amendment, to take the assistance of some other Brethren in the same work; and if they fail in successe therein also, to report the matter by the Elders direction, unto the whole Church. Matth. 18. 16, 17, 18. 1 Thess. 5. 14.

Explication.

In these questions an enquiry is made after the exercise of the discipline in the Church, as to that part of it which belongs unto the reproof and correction of miscarriages according to the distribution of right, power, and priviledge, before explained.

The first act hereof consists in *private admonition*; for so hath our Lord ordained, that in case any Brother, or member of the Church, do in any thing walk disorderly, and not according to the rule of the Gospel, that he, or they, unto whom it is observed, and who are thereby offended, may and ought to admonish the person or persons so offending of their miscarriage and offence, concerning which is to be observed,

First, what is previously required thereunto; and that is,

First, that in all the Members of the Church there ought to be *love without dissimulation.* They are to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, *Rom.* 12. 9, 10. which as they are taught of God, so they are greatly exhorted thereunto; *Heb.* 13. 1. This love is the bond

bond of perfection, the moſt excellent way and means of preſerving Church order, and furthering the edification thereof. 1 *Cor.* 13. Without which, well ſeated, and confirmed in the hearts and minds of Church-members, no duty of their Relation can ever be performed in a due manner.

Secondly, this love is to exert and put forth it ſelf in tender care and watchfulneſs for the good of each other; which are to work by mutual exhortations, informations, inſtructions, according as opportunities do offer themſelves, or as the neceſſities of any do ſeem to require. *Heb.* 3. 13. *Chap* 10. 24.

Secondly, this duty of admoniſhing offenders privately and perſonally, is common to the Elders with all the members of the Church; neither doth it belong properly unto the Elders as ſuch, but as Brethren of the ſame ſociety. And yet by virtue of their office the Elders are enabled to do it with more Authority morally, though office power properly be not exerciſed therein. By virtue alſo of their conſtant general watch over the whole flock in the diſcharge of their office, they are enabled to take notice of, and diſcern miſcarriages in any of the members, ſooner than others. But as to the exerciſe of

of the diſcipline of the Church in this matter, this duty is equally incumbent on every member of it, according as the obligation on them to watch over one another, and to exerciſe eſpecial love towards each other is equal: Whence it is diſtinguiſhed from that private *paſtoral* admonition, which is an act of the teaching office and power, not directly belonging unto the rule or government enquired after. But this admonition is an effect of love and where it proceedeth not from thence, it is irregular, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17, 18. *Rom.* 15. 14.

Thirdly, this duty is ſo incumbent on every member of the Church, that in caſe of the neglect thereof, he both ſinneth againſt the Inſtitution of Chriſt, and makes himſelf partaker of the ſin of the party offending, and is alſo guilty of his danger, and ruine thereby, with all that diſadvantage which will accrue to the Church, by any of the members of it continuing in ſin againſt the rule of the Goſpel. They have not only *liberty* thus to admoniſh one another, but it is their expreſs and indiſpenſible duty ſo to do. The neglect whereof is interpreted by God to be *hatred of our Brother*; ſuch as wherewith the love

of

of God is inconſiſtent, *Levit.* 19, 17. 1 *John* 4. 20. *Chap.* 3. 15.

Fourthly, although this duty be perſonally incumbent on every individual member of the Church, yet this hinders not but if the ſin of an offender be known to more than one at the ſame time, and they joyntly take offence thereat, they may together in the firſt inſtance admoniſh him, which yet ſtill is but the firſt, and *private* admonition; which is otherwiſe, when others are called into aſſiſtance, who are not themſelves acquainted with the offence but only by information, and joyn in it, not upon the account of their own being offended, but of being deſired according unto rule to give aſſiſtance to them that are ſo.

Fifthly, the way and manner of the diſcharge of this duty is, that it be done with prudence, tenderneſs, and due regard unto all circumſtances; whence the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth a ſpiritual *ability* to be neceſſary for this work, Rom. 15. 14. *Ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, ſo that you are able to admoniſh one another*, eſpecially four things are to be diligently heeded.

Firſt, that the whole duty be ſo managed, that

that the perſon *offending* may be convinced, that it is done out of *love* to him and affectionate conſcientious care over him, that he may take no occaſion thereby for the exaſperation of his own ſpirit.

Secondly, that the perſons *admoniſhing* others of their offence, do make it appear that what they do is in obedience unto an inſtitution of Chriſt, and therein to preſerve their own ſouls from ſin, as well as to benefit the offenders.

Thirdly, that the admonition be grounded on a rule, which alone gives it authority and efficacy.

Fourthly, that there be a readineſs manifeſted by them, to receive ſatisfaction; either (1) In caſe that upon tryal, it appeareth the information they have had of the miſcarriage whence the offence aroſe, was *undue*, or not well grounded; or (2) of acknowledgement and repentance.

Sixthly, The ends of this Ordinance and Inſtitution of Chriſt, are,

(1.) To keep up Love without diſſimulation among all the members of the Church; for if *offences* ſhould abide unremoved, love which is the bond of perfection, would not long continue in ſincerity; which tends to the diſſolution of the whole ſociety.

(2.) To

(2.) To gain the *offender*, by delivering him from the guilt of ſin, that he may not lye under it, and procure the wrath of God againſt himſelf, *Levit.* 19. 17.

(3.) To preſerve his perſon from *diſhonour* and diſreputation, and thereby to keep up his uſefulneſs in the Church. To this end hath our Lord appointed the diſcharge of this duty in private, that the failings of men may not be unneceſſarily divulged, and themſelves thereby expoſed unto temptation.

(4) To preſerve the Church from that *ſcandal* that might befall it, by the haſty opening of all the reall or ſuppoſed failings of its members. And

(5.) To prevent its *trouble* in the publick hearing of things that may be otherwiſe healed and removed.

Seventhly, In caſe theſe ends are obtained, either by the ſuppoſed offending perſons *clearing of themſelves*, and manifeſting themſelves innocent of the crimes charged on them, as *Joſhua* 22. 22, 23, 24, 25. 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. Or by their *acknowledgment*, repentance, and amendment, then this part of the diſcipline of the Church hath, through the grace of Chriſt, obtained its appointed effect.

Eighthly,

Eighthly, In case the persons offending be not humbled nor reformed, nor do give satisfaction unto them by whom they are admonished, then hath our Lord ordained a second degree of this private exercise of discipline; that the persons who being offended, have discharged the foregoing duty themselves according unto rule, shall take unto them others, two or three, as the occasion may seem to require, to joyn with them in the same work and duty, to be performed in the same manner for the same ends, with that before described, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. And it is the duty of these persons so called in for assistance,

First, To judge of the crime, fault, or offence reported to them; and not to proceed unless they finde it to consist in some thing expresly contrary to the rule of the Gospel, and attested in such manner, and with such evidence, as their mutual love doth require in them, with respect unto their Brethren. And they are to judge of the testimony that is given concerning the truth of the offence communicated unto them, that they may not seem either lightly to take up a report against their Brother, or to discredit the testimony of others.

Secondly, In case they finde the offence pre-

pretended not to be a reall offence indeed contrary to the rule of the Goſpel, or that is not aright grounded, as to the evidence of it, but taken up upon prejudice, or an over-eaſie credulity, contrary to the law of that love which is required amongſt Church-members, deſcribed 1 *Cor.* 13. and commanded as the great means of the edification of the Church, and preſervation of its union, then to convince the *brother offended* of his miſtake, and with him to ſatisfie the perſon pretended to be the offender, that no breach or *ſchiſm* may happen among the members of the ſame body.

Thirdly, Being ſatisfied of the crime and ſtimony, they are to aſſociate themſelves with the offended Brother in the ſame work and duty, that he himſelf had before diſcharged towards the offender.

Ninthly, Becauſe there is no determination how often theſe *private admonitions* are to be uſed in caſe of offence, it is evident from the nature of the thing it ſelf, that they are to be reiterated; firſt the one, and then the other, whileſt there is any ground of hope, that the ends of them may be obtained through the bleſſing of Chriſt, the Brother gained, and the offence

taken

taken away. Neither of these then is to be deserted, or laid aside, on the first, or second attempt, as though it were performed only to make way for somewhat farther, but it is to be waited on with prayer and patience, as an ordinance of Christ appointed for attaining the end aimed at.

Tenthly, In case there be not the success aimed at obtained in these several degrees of private admonition, it is then the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the matter be reported unto the Church, that the offender may be publickly admonished thereby, and brought to repentance; wherein is to be observed,

First, That the persons who have endeavoured in vain to reclaim their offending Brother by private admonition, are to acquaint the Elders of the Church with the case and crime: as also what they have done according to rule, for the rectifying of it; who upon that information, are obliged to communicate the knowledge of the whole matter to the Church. This is to be done by the Elders, as to whom the preservation of order in the Church, and the rule of its proceeding do belong, as we have shewed before.

Secondly, The report made to the Church

by the Elders is to be, (1.) Of the *crime*, guilt, or offence, (2.) Of the *Teſtimony* given unto the truth of it, (3.) Of the *means* uſed to bring the offender to acknowledgement and repentance, (4) Of his *deportment* under the private previous admonitions either as to his rejecting of them, or as to any ſatisfaction tendered; all in order, love, meekneſs, and tenderneſs.

Thirdly, Things being propoſed unto the Church, and the offender heard upon the whole of the offence, and former proceeding, the whole Church, or multitude of the Brethren, are with the Elders to conſider the nature of the offence, with the condition and temptations of the offenders, with ſuch a ſpirit of meekneſs as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in his own perſon ſet them an example of, in his dealing with ſinners, and which is required in them as his Diſciples, *Gal.* 6. 1, 2. 2 *Cor.* 2. 8.

Fourthly, The Elders and Brethren are to judge of the offence, and the carriage of the offender according to rule, and if the offence be evident, and perſiſted in, then

Fifthly, The offender is to be *publickly admoniſhed* by the Elders, with the conſent and concurrence of the Church, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 14. 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. *Matth.* 18. 16, 17. And

this admonition consists of Five parts;

(1.) A declaration of the *crime* or offence, as it is evidenced unto the Church.

(2.) A conviction of the *evil* of it, from the rule, or rules transgressed against.

(3.) A declaration of the *authority* and duty of the Church in such cases.

(4.) A rebuke of the offender in the name of Christ, answering the nature and circumstances of the offence.

(5.) An Exhortation unto *humiliation* and repentance and acknowledgement.

Eleventhly, In case the offender despise this admonition of the Church, and come not upon it unto repentance, it is the will and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ that he be *cut off* from all the Priviledges of the Church, and cast out from the society thereof, or be *excommunicated*, wherein consists the *last act* of the discipline of the Church for the correction of offenders; and herein may be considered,

First, The nature of it, that it is an *authoritative act* and so principally belongs unto the Elders of the Church, who therein exert the power that they have received from the Lord Christ, by and with the consent of the Church according to his appointment, *Matth.* 16. 19. *John* 20. 23. *Matth.*

Matth. 18. 18. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. *Titus* 3. 10. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. And both these the Authority of the Eldership, and the consent of the Brethren, are necessary to the validity of the sentence, and that according to the appointment of Christ, and the practice of the first Churches.

Secondly, The *effect* of it, which is the cutting off, or casting out of the person offending from the communion of the Church, in the Priviledges of the Gospel, as consequently from that of all the visible Churches of Christ in the earth by virtue of their communion one with another, whereby he is left unto the visible Kingdom of Satan in the World, *Matth.* 18. 17. 1 *Cor.* 5. 2, 5, 13. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. *Titus* 3. 10. *Gal.* 5. 12.

Thirdly, The *ends* of it which are,

(1.) The *gaining* of the party offending, by bringing him to repentance, humiliation, and acknowledgement of his offence, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7. 2 *Cor.* 13. 10.

(2.) The *warning* of others not to do so presumptuously.

(3.) The *preserving* of the Church in its purity and order, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6, 7. all to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, The *causes* of it or the grounds

and reasons on which the Church may proceed unto sentence against any offending persons. Now these are no other but such as they judge according to the Gospel, that the Lord Christ will proceed upon in his final judgement at the last day. For the Church judgeth in the name and authority of Christ, and are to exclude none from its communion, but those whom they find by the rule, that he himself excludes from his Kingdom; and so that which they bind on earth, is bound by him in Heaven, *Matth.* 18. 18. And their sentence herein is to be declared, as the declaration of the sentence which the Head of the Church, and Judge of all, will pronounce at the last day; only with this difference, that it is also made known, that this sentence of theirs, is not final or decretory, but in order to the prevention of that which will be so, unless the evil be repented of. Now although the particular evils, sins, or offences, that may render a person obnoxious unto this censure and sentence, are not to be enumerated, by reason of the variety of circumstances which change the nature of actions, yet they may in general be referred unto these heads.

First,

Firſt, *Moral evils*, contrary to the light of nature, and expreſs commands or prohibitions of the moral Law, direct rules of the Goſpel, or of evil report in the world amongſt men walking according to the rule and light of reaſon. And in caſes of this nature, the Church may proceed unto the ſentence whereof we ſpeak, without previous admonition, in caſe the matter of fact be *notorious*, publickly and unqueſtionably known to be true, and no general rule (which is not to be impeached by particular inſtances) lye againſt their procedure, 1 *Cor.* 5. 3 4. 2 *Tim.* 3. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Secondly, Offences againſt that *mutual love* which is the bond of perfection in the Church, if pertinaciouſly perſiſted in, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17.

Thirdly, *Falſe doctrines* againſt the fundamentals in faith or worſhip, eſpecially if maintained with contention, to the trouble and diſturbance of the peace of the Church, *Gal.* 5. 12. *Titus* 3. 9, 10, 11. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4, 5. *Revel.* 2. 14, 15.

Fourthly, Blaſphemy, or evil ſpeaking of the wayes and worſhip of God in the Church, eſpecially if joyned with an intention to hinder the proſperity of the Church, or to expoſe it to perſecution, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20.

Fifthly, Desertion, or total causeless relinquishment of the society and communion of the Church; for such are self-condemned, having broken and renounced the covenant of God, that they made at their entrance into the Church, *Heb.* 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Sixthly, The time or season of the putting forth the authority of Christ in the Church for this censure, is to be considered; and that is ordinarily after the admonition before described, and that with due waiting, to be regulated by a consideration of times, persons, temptations, and other circumstances. For,

(1.) The Church in proceeding to this sentence, is to express the patience and long-suffering of Christ towards offenders, and not to put it forth without conviction of a present resolved impenitency.

(2.) The event and effect of the preceding Ordinance of *admonition* is to be expected; which though not at present evident, yet like the word it self in the preaching of it, may be blessed to a good issue after many dayes.

Sixthly, The person offending, thus cut off, or cast out from the present actual communion of the Church, is still to be looked on

on and accounted as a Brother, becauſe of the nature of the Ordinance which is intended for his amendment and recovery, 2 Theſ. 3. 15. *Count him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a Brother*; unleſs he manifeſt his final impenitency, by blaſphemy and perſecution, 1 Tim. 1. 20. *Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.*

Seventhly, The Church is therefore ſtill to perform the duties of love, and care, towards ſuch perſons.

(1.) In *praying* for them, that they may be converted from the errour of their way, James 5. 19, 20. 1 *John* 5. 16. *If any man ſee his Brother ſin a ſin, which is not unto death, he ſhall ask, and he ſhall give him life; for them that ſin not unto death.*

(2.) In *withdrawing* from them even *as* to ordinary converſe, for their conviction of their ſtate and condition, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. 2 *Theſ.* 3. 14. *With ſuch a one no not to eat.*

(3.) In *admoniſhing* of them, 2 Cor. 3. 15. *admoniſh him as a Brother*; which may be done (1) *Occaſionally*, by any Member of the Church (2) On *ſet purpoſe* by the conſent and and appointment of the whole Church; which admonition is to contain,

(1.) A *preſſing of their ſin* from the rule

on the Conscience of the offender.

(2.) A *declaration* of the nature of the censure and punishment which they lye under.

(3.) A manifestation of the danger of their impenitency, in their being either hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, or exposed unto new temptations of Sathan.

Eighthly, In case the Lord Jesus be pleased to give a blessed effect unto this ordinance, in the repentance of the person cut off, and cast out of the Church; he is,

First, To be *forgiven* both by those who in an especial manner were offended at him, and by him, and by the whole Church, *Matth.* 18. 18. 2 *Cor.* 2. 7.

Secondly, To be *comforted* under his sorrow, 2 *Cor.* 2 7. And that by (1) The *application* of the Promises of the Gospel unto his Conscience, (2) A declaration of the readiness of the Church to receive him again into their love and communion.

Fourthly, *Restored* (1) By a *confirmation* or testification of the love of the Church unto him, 2 Cor. 2. 8. (2) A *readmission* unto the exercise and enjoyment of his former Priviledges in the fellowship of the Church; all with a spirit of meekness, *Gal.* 6. 1.

Quest.

Queſt. 47. *The preſervation of the Church in purity, order, and holineſs being provided for, by what way is it to be continued and increaſed?*

Anſw. The way appointed thereunto, is by adding ſuch as being effectually called unto the obedience of faith, ſhall voluntarily offer themſelves unto the ſociety and fellowſhip thereof, Acts 2. 41. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Explication.

The means appointed by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for the continuance and increaſe of the Church, are either *preparatory* unto it, or inſtrumentally efficient of it. The principal means ſubſervient or preparatory unto the continuance and increaſe of the Church, is the *preaching of the Word* to the conviction, illumination and converſion of ſinners, whereby they may be made meet to become living ſtones in this ſpiritual building, and members of the myſtical body of Chriſt. And this is done either *ordinarily* in the Aſſemblies of the Church, towards ſuch as come in unto them and attend to the Word diſpenſed according to

to the appointment of Christ amongst them, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God*; or occasionally amongst the *Men* of the World, Act. 8. 4.

Secondly, The *instrumentally efficient* cause is that which is expressed in the answer, namely the *adding* in due order unto it, such as being effectually called unto the obedience of the Faith and profession of the Gospel, do *voluntarily* out of conviction of their duty, and resolution to walk in subjection to all the ordinances and commands of Christ, offer themselves to the society and fellowship thereof, whereby they may be laid in this spiritual building, as the stones were in the Temple of old, which were hewed and fitted elsewhere.

Qu. 48. *What is required of them who desire to joyn themselves unto the Church?*

Ans. (1.) That they be free from blame and offence in the World. (2) That they be instructed in the saving truths and mysteries of the Gospel. (3) Sound in the faith. (4) That the Lord having called them

them unto faith, repentance, and newness of life by Jesus Christ, they give up themselves to be saved by him, and to obey him in all things; and therefore (5) Are willing and ready through his grace, to walk in subjection to all his commands, and in the observation of all his laws and institutions, notwithstanding any difficulties, oppositions, or persecutions which they meet withall. (1) Phil. 1. 10. Chap. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 32. 1 Thess. 2. 11, 12. Tit. 2. 10. (2) John 6. 15. Acts 26. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 6. (3) 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Tit. 1. 13. Jude 3. (4) Ephes. 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. (5) 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Qu. 49. *What is the duty of the Elders of the Church, towards persons desiring to be admitted unto the fellowship of the Church?*

Ans. (1.) To discern and judge by the rule of truth applyed in love, between sincere professors and hypocritical pretenders. (2) To instruct, direct, comfort, and encourage in the way, such as they judge to love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. (3) To propose and recommend them unto the whole Church, with prayers and supplications to God for them. (4) To admit

admit them being approved into the order and fellowship of the Gospel in the Church. Acts 8 20,23. Tit. 1.10. Rev. 2.2. Jer. 15. 19. Acts 18.26. 1 Thess 2.7,8,11. Acts 9. 29, 27. Rom. 14.1.

Qu. 50. *What is the duty of the whole Church in reference unto such persons?*

Ans. To consider them in love and meekness, according as their condition is known, reported, or testified unto them, to approve of, and rejoyce in the grace of God in them, and to receive them in love without dissimulation. 1 Cor. 13.

Explication.

What in general is required unto the fitting of any persons to be members of a visible Church of Christ, was before declared, and that is, that, which the Lord Jesus hath made the indispensible condition of entring into his Kingdom, namely of being born again. *John* 3.33. This work being secret, hidden, and invisible, the Church cannot judge of directly and in its own form or nature, but in the means, effects, and consequents of it, which are to be testified unto it concerning them who are to be admitted

mitted unto its fellowſhip and communion; it is required therefore of them,

Firſt, that they be of a converſation free from blame in the world; for whereas one end of the gathering of Churches is to hold forth, and expreſs the holineſs of the doctrine of Chriſt, and the power of his grace in turning Men from all ungodlineſs unto ſobriety, righteouſneſs and honeſty, it is required of them that are admitted into them, that they anſwer this end. And this the principle of grace which is communicated unto them that believe, will effect and produce. For although it doth not follow that every one who hath attained an unblameable honeſty in this World, is inwardly quickened with a true principle of ſaving grace, yet it doth, that they who are endowed with that Principle, will be ſo unblameable. And although they may on other accounts be evil ſpoken of, yet their good converſation in Chriſt will juſtifie it ſelf.

Secondly, competent knowledge in the myſteries of the Goſpel, is another means whereby the great qualification inquired after is teſtified unto the Church. For as without this no *priviledge* of the Goſpel can be profitably made uſe of, nor any *duty* of it be rightly performed,

ſo

so *saving light* is of the essence of conversion, and doth inseparably accompany it. 2 Cor. 4 6. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* Where this is wanting, it is impossible for any person to evidence that he is delivered from that blindness, darkness, and ignorance, which all men are under the power of in the state of nature. Such a measure then of light and knowledge, as whereby men are enabled to apprehend aright of the person and offices of Christ, of the nature of his mediation, the benefits thereof, and the obedience that he requires at the hands of his Disciples, is expected in them who desire to be admitted into the fellowship of the Church.

Thirdly, Hereunto is to be added, *soundness* in the faith. For the *unity of faith* in the foundation of Love and all the duties thereof, which in an especial manner are to be performed towards the Church, called therefore the *house hold of Faith.* There is among the members of the Church one *faith*; Ephes. 4. 5. The common faith, the faith once delivered unto the Saints, *Jude* 3. Which is the *sound doctrine*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 10.

Which thoſe that will not endure, muſt be urned from; 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. the *faithful ord* that is to be held faſt. *Tit.* 1. 9. 1 *Tim.* 19. And which we are to be *found* in; *it.* 1. 13. Contained in a *form of ſound ords*, as to the profeſſion of it, 2 *Tim.* 13. And this *ſoundneſs* in the unity of the ith, as it ſhould be improved unto *one-ſs of mind*, and oneneſs of accord, in all he things of God, *Phil.* 2. 2. though it may admit of ſome different apprehenſions in ſome things, wherein ſome may have ore clear and diſtinct diſcoveries of the mind and will of God than others, which inders not, but that all may walk according to the ſame rule, *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. So it is principally to be regarded in the *fundamental truths* of the Goſpel, in and by the faith whereof the Church holdeth on the head Jeſus Chriſt; *Coloſſ.* 2 19. And in the *fundamental principles of Goſpel wor-ſhip*, the joynt celebration whereof, is the next end of gathering the Church; for without a conſent of mind and accord herein, no duty can be performed unto edification, nor the peace of the Church be preſerved; and theſe Principles are thoſe which we have explained.

Fourthly, it is required that theſe things

be

be *testified* by them unto the Church, with the acknowledgement of the work of Gods grace towards them, and their resolution through the power of the same grace to cleave unto the Lord Christ with full purpose of heart, and to live in all holy obedience unto him. They come to the Church, as Disciples of Christ professing that they have learnt the truth as it is in *Jesus*, which what it inferrs, the Apostle teacheth at large; *Ephes.* 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. See also *Acts* 11. 23. *Acts* 8. 21, 22, 23. And this by themselves to be testified unto the Church.

First, that they may be received in love without dissimulation, as real partakers in the same faith, hope and salvation with themselves, as living members of the *mystical* body of Christ.

Secondly, That on all ensuing occasions, they may be minded of their own profession and engagements, to stir them up thereby unto faithfulness, stedfastness, and perseverance. Hereupon are the Elders of the Church to judge by the rule of truth in Love and meekness concerning their condition, and meetness to be laid as living stones in the house of God; so as that they may,

(1.) Reject

(1.) Reject false *hypocritical* pretenders, if in or by any means their *hypocrisie* be discovered unto them. *Acts* 8. 20. 23. *Titus* 1. 10. *Jer.* 15. 19.

(2.) That they may direct, and encourage in the way, such as appear to be sincere, instructing them principally in the nature of the way whereinto they are engaging, the duties, dangers, and benefits of it. *Acts* 18. 26. *Act.* 14. 22. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

(3.) To propose them, their conditions, their desires, their resolutions, unto the Church after their own expressions of them, to be considered of in love and meekness, *Acts* 9. 26, 27. Whereupon those that are approved, do give up themselves unto the Lord, to walk in the observation of all his commands and ordinances, and to the Church for the Lords sake, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. abiding in the fellowship thereof, whereunto they are admitted, *Acts* 2. 41, 42.

Quest. 51. *Wherein doth the especial form of a particular Church whereby it becomes such, and is distinguished as such from all others, consist?*

Answ. In the special consent and agreement of all the members of it, to walk together in the observation of the same Ordinances

dinances numerically; hence its conſtitution and diſtinction from other Churches doth proceed. Exod. 19. 5, 8. Chap. 24. 3, 7. Deut. 26. 17. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Acts 14. 23. Acts 20. 28. Heb. 13. 17.

Explication.

It hath been before declared, what eſpecial agreement or *covenant* there ought to be among all the members of the ſame Church, to walk together in a due ſubjection unto, and obſervance of all the inſtitutions of the Lord Chriſt. And this is that which gives it its ſpecial *form* and diſtinction from all other Churches. In the general nature of a Church, all Churches do agree, and equally partake. There is the ſame *law* of the conſtitution of them all; they have all the ſame *rule* of obedience; all the ſame *Head*, the ſame end; all carry it on by the obſervation of the ſame Ordinances in *kind*. Now beſides theſe things which belong unto the nature of a Church in general, and wherein they all equally participate, they muſt alſo have each one its proper *difference*, that which doth diſtinguiſh it from all other Churches; and this gives it its ſpecial form as ſuch. Now this cannot conſiſt

ſiſt in any thing that is accidental, occaſional, or extrinſecal unto it; ſuch as is *cohabitation*, (which yet the Church may have reſpect unto, for conveniency, and farthering of its edification) nor in any civil or *political* diſpoſal of its members into civil ſocieties for civil ends, which is *extrinſecal* to all its concernments as a Church; nor doth it conſiſt in the relation of the Church to its preſent Officers, which may be removed or taken away without the diſſolution of the *form* or being of the Church, but it conſiſteth as was ſaid in the agreement or covenant before mentioned; For

First, This is that which conſtitutes them a *diſtinct body*, different from others; for thereby and no otherwiſe do they coaleſce into a ſociety, according to the law of their conſtitution and appointment.

Secondly, This gives them their *eſpecial relation* unto their own Elders, Rulers, or Guides, who watch over them as ſo aſſociated by their own conſent, according unto the command of Chriſt. And

Thirdly, From hence they have their mutual eſpecial relation unto one another, which is the ground of the eſpecial exerciſe of all Church-duties whatſoever.

Quest. 52. *Wherein consists the duty of any Church of Christ towards other Churches?*

Answ. (1) In walking circumspectly, so as to give them no offence. (2) In Prayer for their peace and prosperity. (3) In communicating supplyes to their wants according to ability. (4) In receiving with love and readiness the members of them into fellowship, in the celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel, as occasion shall be. (5) In desiring and making use of their counsel and advice in such cases of doubt, and difficulty, as may arise among them. (6) In joyning with them to express their communion in the same doctrine of faith. (1) 1 Cor. 10, 32. (2) Psal. 122. 6. Ephes. 6.18. 1 Tim. 2. 1. (3) 2 Cor. 8. 4, 6. Acts 11. 29, 30. Rom. 15. 26, 27. (4) Rom. 16. 1, 2. 3 Ep. Joh. 8, 9. (5) Acts 15. 2. (6) 1 Tim. 3. 15.

Explication.

Churches being gathered and setled according to the minde of Christ, ought to preserve a mutual holy communion among themselves, and to exercise it, in the discharge of those duties whereby their mu-

tual

tual good and edification may be promoted. For whereas they are all united under *one Head* the Lord Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 22, 23. in the *ſame faith* and order, *Epheſ.* 4. 5. And do walk by the *ſame rule*, they ſtand in ſuch a relation one to another, as is the ground of the communion ſpoken of. Now the principal wayes, whereby they exerciſe this communion, are the acts and *duties* enumerated in the anſwer unto this Queſtion; as,

Firſt, Carefull walking ſo as to give no offence unto one another; which although it be a *moral duty* in reference unto all, yet therein eſpecial regard is to be had unto other Churches of Chriſt, that they be not in any thing grieved or tempted, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. *Give none offence; neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.*

Secondly, In conſtant *prayer* for the peace, welfare, edification and proſperity one of another, *Rom.* 1. 9. *Coloſſ.* 1. 9. *Eph.* 6. 18. And this becauſe of the ſpecial concernment of the name and glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in their welfare.

Thirdly, In communicating of ſupplyes for their relief according unto their ability, in caſe of the outward wants, ſtraits, dan-

gers, or receſſities of any of them, *Act.* 11. 29, 30. *Rom.* 15. 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* 8. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14.

Fourthly, The receiving of the members of other Churches to communion, in the celebration of Church-Ordinances, is another way whereby this communion of Churches is exerciſed, *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. 3 Ep. *Joh.* 8. 9. For whereas the perſonal right of ſuch perſons unto the Ordinances of the Church, and their orderly walking in the obſervation of the commands of Chriſt, are known by the teſtimony of the Church whereof they are members, they may without farther enquiry or ſatisfaction given, be looked on *pro tempore* as members of the Church wherein they deſire fellowſhip, and participation of the Ordinances of Chriſt.

Fifthly, In deſiring or making uſe of the counſel and advice of one another, in ſuch caſes of doubt and difficulty, whether *doctrinal*, or *practical*, as may ariſe in any of them, *Act.* 15. 2, 6. And from hence it follows, that in caſe any Church either by errour in doctrine, or precipitation, or miſtake in other adminiſtrations, do give offence unto other Churches, thoſe other churches may require an account from them, admoniſh them of their faults, and withhold

old communion from them, in caſe they erſiſt in the error of their way; and that ecauſe *in* their difficulties, and *before* their iſcarriages, they were bound to have deired the advice, counſel and aſſiſtance of hoſe other Churches, which being negected by them, the other are to recover he end of it unto their utmoſt ability; *Gal.* 2. 6. 11. And hence alſo it follows, hat thoſe that are *rightly* and *juſtly* cenſured in any Church, ought to be rejected by all Churches whatever; both becauſe of heir mutual communion, and becauſe it is, and ought to be preſumed, untill the contrary be made to appear, that in caſe there had been any difficulty, or doubt in the procedure of the Church, they would have taken the advice of thoſe Churches, with whom they were obliged to conſult.

Laſtly, Whereas the Churches have all of them one *common faith*, and are all obliged to *hold forth* and declare it to all men as they have opportunity, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. to teſtifie this their mutual communion, their intereſt in the ſame faith and hope, for the more open declaration and propoſition of the truths of the Goſpel which they profeſs, and for the vindication both of the truth, and themſelves, from falſe charges and

and imputations, they may, and if God give opportunity, *ought* to joyn together in declaring and testifying their joynt consent and fellowship in the same doctrine of Faith, expressed in a *form of sound words.*

Quest. 53. *What are the ends of all this Dispensation and order of things in the Church?*

Answ. The glory of God, the honour of Jesus Christ the Mediator, the furtherance of the Gospel, the edification and consolation of Believers here; with their eternal salvation hereafter. Rev. 4. 9, 10, 11. Chap. 5. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13.

FINIS.

Question.

May a true Church of Christ Err or Mistake in the Administration of Church-Censures?

Answ. A true Church of Christ may Err and Mistake in the Administration of the Censures, or any Act of Discipline; whereby Members of it, who are true Members of Christ, may be injured, and sundry other Inconveniencies may ensue.

And this is not unduly supposed:

1. Because no particular Church is absolutely *Infallible*, either in Doctrine or Administrations, especially in such Points or Things as overthrow not the foundation of Faith or Worship.

2. Because Churches are more obnoxious and liable to Error and Mistake in their Administrations and Discipline, than in Doctrine: for all Doctrines of Truth are absolutely determined and revealed in the Scripture, so that there is no Principle, Means, nor cause of Mistake about them, but what is only in the *minds of Men* that inquire into them and after them; But the Administration of the Censures of the Church hath respect unto many *fallible mediums* requiring Testimonies, Evidences, and Circumstances, which of themselves may lead

a Church acting in sincerity into many mistakes; especially considering how much in the dark unto us for the most part are the principles, causes and ends of Actions, the frames of Mens spirits in and after them; all which in such Cases deserve much consideration.

3. Churches have Erred in not administring the Censures of the Gospel, according unto Order and their Duty, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. *Prov.* 2. 14. 20.

4. The Experience of all Ages confirms the truth of this Supposition. The first Church-Censure, after the death of the Apostles, that is remaining on any Record, was that of the Church of *Corinth* against some of their Elders; wherein how they miscarried, is evident from the Epistle of the *Church of Rome* unto them about that matter.

Corolary.

In case any Question arise about the Administration of any Censure in a Church of Christ, it ought to be very jealous, lest it have in matter or manner miscarried therein; seeing absolutely they may do so, and seeing there are so many ways and means whereby they may actually be induced into Mistakes.

Q. *Is it necessary that such mal-Administrations be rectified?*

A. It is necessary that such mal-Administrations should be rectified, by some way or means of

of Christs appointment. And it is so;

1. First on the part of the *Censures* themselves; and that,

I. Because of their *nullity*; for they are *null* and bind not.

1. *In foro cœli.* They bind not in Heaven; for the Lord Christ ratifieth nothing in Heaven, but what is done in his Name, by his Commission, and according to his Word; in some or all of which every *mal-Administration* faileth.

2. Not *in foro conscientiæ*: for Conscience is not bound, nor will bind on meer external Ecclesiastical Authority, where the Person is indeed free, and judgeth himself to be so according unto Rule.

Only such Censures may be said to bind for a season, in some Cases, in the Church, but that *quoad ordinem exteriorem & mere Ecclesiasticum*, with respect unto outward Order, that the peace of the Church be not troubled, until mistakes may be rectified; but not *quoad ordinem internum & mere spiritualem*, with reference unto the dependance of the whole Church on Christ the Head.

II. Because of the consequents of them; disadvantage to the Gospel, prejudice to the Ways of Christ, and the utter impairing of the Authority of all Church-censures must needs ensue, if there be no way to rectifie such mistakes, or if they are left unrectified, as may easily be manifested.

2. Secondly, This is neceſſary on the part of the Church ſuppoſed to have erred. For whereas all Church-power is for *edification*, that which is unduly put forth and exerciſed is rather for *deſtruction*; the guilt whereof every Church ought to rejoyce in being delivered from; eſpecially conſidering that there is much more evil in *condemning the Righteous*, than in *acquitting the Wicked*, though both of them be an abomination.

3. Thirdly, On the part of the Perſons unduly, or unjuſtly ſeparated from the Church by ſuch Cenſures. This is ſo evident that it needs no confirmation.

4. Fourthly, On the account of all other Churches holding communion with the Church which hath (as is ſuppoſed to have) *miſcarried*. The Reaſons hereof will afterwards be made to appear.

Corolary.

This Relief, by what means ſoever it is to be obtained, is of great uſe to the Churches of Chriſt, and of great concernment unto their Peace and Edification.

Q. *How may ſuch Adminiſtrations be rectified?*

A. The rectifying of ſuch mal-Adminiſtrations, may be, (and is ordinarily no otherwiſe to be expected, but) by the Advice and Counſel of other Churches, walking in the ſame Fellowſhip and Ordinances of the Goſpel with that

that Church so failing as is supposed: And this to be given upon the hearing and understanding of the whole proceedings of that Church in the Administration supposed irregular.

This being the principal thing aimed at, must be further considered. And,

(1.) The way, or means whereby other Churches come to the knowledg of such supposed miscarriages in any Church of their Communion, may be considered: Now this is either,

1. *By publick Report*: So the *Israelites* took notice of the fact of the *Reubenites* and *Gadites* in building of an Altar; which thereupon they sent to enquire about; *(they heard say they had done it*, Josh. 22. 11.) So the Apostle took notice of the miscarriage of the *Church of Corinth* in the case of the incestuous Person, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. And this is a sufficient ground of inquiry, or of defining an Account of any Church in such Cases.

2. *By Information* of particular persons whom they judg holy and faithful: So the Apostle took notice of the dissentions in the Church of *Corinth*; *they were declared unto him by them of the house of* Cloe, 1 *Cor.* 1. 11.

3. By an *Account* given unto them by any Church requiring their advice in any case of difficulty, either before or after the Administration of Censures; So the *Church at Antioch* gave

an *account* of their troubles and differences to the Church at *Jeruſalem*, Acts 15.

4. By the *Addreſſes* of the Perſons injured, or ſuppoſing themſelves to be ſo; which to make, whilſt they judg themſelves Innocent, is their indiſpenſible duty; either *Firſt*, Directly by ſeeking Advice or Counſel from them; or *Secondly*, By deſiring Admiſſion into the Fellowſhip of the Goſpel with them; which they cannot grant without an inquiry into the Cauſes of their Separation from any other Church or Society.

Corolary.

Where there is a concurrence of the moſt ways or means of Information, there ought to be the more diligence in the inquiry.

Hence it follows,

That it is the duty of Churches walking in the ſame order and fellowſhip of the Goſpel, upon ſuch information or complaint as before mentioned, of any undue Adminiſtration of Church-Cenſures, eſpecially of *Excommunication* by any Church amongſt themſelves, to inquire by their *Meſſengers* into the cauſe and manner of it, to the end that they may give their joynt-advice and counſel in the matter: And it is the duty of the Church complained of, or informed againſt, to give them an Account of all their proceedings in that Caſe, with their Reaſons for their procedure, and to hear-

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ken unto and consider the Advice that shall be offered and given unto them.

And this will appear sufficiently confirmed, if we consider, in order unto a right Judgment of the Grounds whereon this way and practice is asserted:

1. That this Advice of Churches in Communion to be given and taken, is no ordinary or standing Ordinance of the Church as to its practice, though it be as unto its Right; but is only to be made use of in *extraordinary cases*, and such as *should* not occur, although they will; and for this cause it is more sparingly mentioned in the Scripture.

2. That it is, and may be fully proved to be the Duty of all Churches, by previous advice with other Churches in cases of difficulty, to prevent this consequent Counsel, which being after a sentence given, must needs be attended with many difficulties.

3. That the practice of the Churches as to Discipline, is no longer recorded in the Scripture, than they had the direction and help of the Apostles, which supplied all extraordinary emergencies among them; so that many instances of this practice amongst them, are not to be expected; It is of the care and wisdom of our Lord Jesus that we have any.

4. That we must be here contented with such Arguments and Testimonies as we act up-

on in other Ordinances and things belonging to the Worſhip and Order of the Churches; ſuch as the diſtribution of Elders into Teaching and Ruling; the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments by Officers only; Geſture in the Sacrament of the Supper; Obſervation of the firſt Day of the Week; and the like.

Theſe things being premiſed; the Order above expreſſed, is confirmed;

(1.) *From the Light and Law of Nature, with the unalterable Reaſon of the thing it ſelf.* Hence are Churches directed into this Order and Practice.

There is ſomewhat that is *moral* in all Ordinances. Some of them are wholly ſo as to their matter and ſubſtance, and founded in the light of Nature, being only *directed* as to their principle, manner, and end, in the Goſpel; ſuch is *Excommunication* it ſelf, as might eaſily be made to appear.

And from hence a direction unto Duty, and an indiſpenſible obligation unto Obedience doth ariſe. That which is *Moral* in any Ordinance doth no leſs oblige us to an obſervation of it, than that which is of meer Inſtitution. And it obligeth us becauſe it is *Moral*; And the Lord Chriſt being in all things the Lord of our Conſciences, what we do therein we do it in obedience unto him.

Now that the Order eſtabliſhed is thus grounded

grounded and warranted, appears by the ensuing Rules, taken from the light of Nature.

1. *Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari debet.* All Men are to consider that wherein the concernment of all doth lie, according to their respective Interests: What is the Ground and Reason why all the Members of a Church do consider, determine, give their Counsel and consent, in the case of any Persons being cast out of their society? It is warranted by virtue of this Rule. They all have Communion with such a Person, and must all withdraw Communion from him, and therefore must consider the Reason of his Excision or cutting off. Now a Church in its Censures, doth not eject any one from the enjoyment of Ordinances *Numerically* only, that is, in that one *Society*; but *specifically*, that is, from the Ordinances of Christ in all Churches. Hence it becomes the concernment of other Churches, even as many as the Person ejected may seek Communion from; and therefore it is to be considered by them, with respect unto their own duty of walking towards him.

2. *Cujus est judicare ejus est cognoscere.* Whoever is to judg, is to take cognizance of the Fact, and the reason of it: This is to be done according to the several Interests that Men may have in the matter under consideration; which in some is of *Jurisdiction*, which in this case we

we admit not of; in others of *Counsel* and Advice. Now other Churches are not allowed in this case to be meerly *passive* and indifferent; but must make a determination in it. This is evident on supposition of the injured Person's offering himself to their Communion: For they must reject him, or receive him. In both they judg, and therein must take cognizance by hearing the matter from the Church; and so on both sides. And unless this be allowed, no Church can or ought to expect that any other Church will reject from communion any one whom they reject, meerly because they are rejected, unless they suppose their Judgment to be absolutely a Rule unto other Churches to walk by, in their observation of the Commands and Institutions of Christ.

3. On the part of the Persons supposed to be injured; Every Man by the Law of Nature is obliged to undertake *inculpatam sui tutelam*, the just defence of his own Innocency, by all lawful ways and means. And as absolutely, the way, means, and measure of this defence is left unto a Mans own prudence; so there is a Rule given unto it, where ever the *Glory of God*, or of the good of his Neighbour is concerned: if either of these suffer by his wrong, he is obliged to vindicate his own Innocency, nor is at liberty to suffer false Imputations to lie upon him. It is in such cases a Mans sin not to do so.

so. And in the case under consideration this can be done only by an address unto other Persons for their Assistance according to their interest. An interest of *Jurisdiction* in Civil Courts, or in Churches, in this case there is none. The interest of private Persons herein, is of *compassion*, prayer, and private advice; the interest of Churches is, a cognizance of the cause, with Advice and Judgment thereon. And for Persons or Churches not to give Assistance in this case according to the Truth and Equity, is their sin.

That these are Principles of the light of Nature, and the natural Reason of such things, appears from the general allowance of them so to be, and their constant practice amongst all Men walking according to that Light and Law.

Corolary.

If Churches, as they are Assemblies and Societies of Men in Communion for the same end, observe not the indispensable Rules of Societies, they cannot as such be ordinarily preserved in their being and Communion.

Secondly, The way and order laid down, is directed unto, warranted and confirmed by generals Rules of the Scripture.

1. *On the part of the Church supposed to Err in its Administrations.*

There are sundry general Rules which declare it to be their duty to give an account unto

to other Churches, of their proceedings therein, and to consider their Advice; some of these may be named; as,

1. *That they give none offence to the Churches of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 32. *To give no offence in any thing, that their Ministry be not blamed*, 2 Cor. 6. 3. upon a supposition, or information, or complaint of mal-Administration of any Ordinance, *offence may be taken*, and that if accompanied (as it may be) with much appearing evidence, justly. And in this case the Church hath no way to clear it self from having indeed *given offence*, but by giving an account of their proceedings and the Reason thereof. And without this it cannot be avoided, but that *offences* will be multiplied amongst the Churches of Christ, and that to the utter ruine of their mutual communion. Thus when *Peter* by the special Command and Direction of God, went and preached the *Gospel to the Gentiles*, many, not knowing the grounds of his so doing, nor his *warrant* for it, took offence at it, and charged him with irregular walking, *Acts* 11. 2, 3. In this case, he doth not defend himself by his *Apostolical Authority* and Priviledg; nor in a few words tell them he had a *Warrant* for what he did; but to remove all doubts, questions and causes of offence, he distinctly *repeats the whole matter*, and all the circumstances of it; An example of so great im-

importance, that the Holy Ghoſt thought meet at large to expreſs his Account and Defence, though the matter of it was ſet down immediately before, *Acts Chap.* 10. & 11.

2. *That they be ready always to give an answer* (that is, an account) *of the hope that is in them*, (and conſequently of their practice ſuitable thereunto) *with meekneſs and fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. This proves it *a minore ad majus*; if they ſhould be ready thus to anſwer *every Man*, much more many Churches of God, and that in and about things of their mutual Edification.

3. That in particular they *clear themſelves*, when ſuffering under any imputation, or being in danger of ſo doing; *What carefulneſs it wrought in you, what clearing of your ſelves: in all things you have approved your ſelves to be clear in this matter*, 2 Cor. 7. 11. And this on many accounts, is the duty of a Church in the caſe propoſed; the Glory of God, the Honour of Chriſt, their own peace and edification, with the peace and credit of all other Churches require it of them. Nor can this Duty be any otherwiſe performed, but by this giving an account of their own proceedings, and receiving the Advice of other Churches therein. And if this be not done freely, with readineſs and ſubmiſſion of mind, there is no way left to preſerve the Peace and *Communion of Churches*. Thoſe who ſuppoſe they may in ſuch caſes act

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in a way of *Juriſdiction* and Church-Power, can attain the End by them aimed at, by virtue of the Cenſures which they do adminiſter. But in this way of *counſel and advice*, unleſs thoſe who are concerned to give an account of themſelves, will do it with meekneſs, gentleneſs, mutual truſt and confidence, ſuitable unto the conduct of the Spirit of Chriſt in obedience unto his Inſtitutions, the whole End of it will be in danger to be fruſtrate.

2. *On the part of other Churches.*

1. All Churches walking in the ſame order and fellowſhip of the Goſpel are mutually debtors to each other for their good and edification. *Their debtors they are*, Rom. 15. 27. And this debt in this caſe can no otherwiſe be paid, but by the way preſcribed.

2. What the Apoſtles did, might do, and *ought* to do towards one another, who were all equal by virtue of their common Intereſt in the ſame work, that one Church may do, and ought to do towards another, or many Churches towards one: But one Apoſtle might take *cognizance* of the ways and walking of another, and withſtand, adviſe, or reprove him if in any thing he failed, and walked not with a right foot, *Gal.* 2. 11, 14, 15.

Corolary.

General Rules containing the Grounds and Reaſons of particular Inſtitutions, are a ſure gui-

guidance and direction in and unto their observation.

The Way and Order expreſſed is warranted by *neceſſity*; as that without which the Peace, Communion, and Edification of the Churches cannot be preſerved and carried on; As,

1. On the part of the Church whoſe Adminiſtrations are queſtioned. The Perſons cenſur'd, (which is ordinary) may in their own vindication, or by way of undue reflection, not to be diſcovered without a juſt examination, impair their reputation with other Churches, or many Members of them, whereby it may ſuffer and be expoſed to ſundry Inconveniencies: in this caſe a Church can have no relief, but by reporting the matter unto other Churches; ſo ſeeking their advice and counſel, whereby they may receive great encouragement, comfort, and boldneſs in the Lord, if found to have proceeded according unto Rule.

2. On the part of other Churches; A Church may either cauſeleſly or with juſt cauſe, caſt out or withdraw Communion from ſuch a number of their Members, as bearing themſelves on their own innocency and right, may continue in a Society, and plead that the power, authority, and priviledg of the Church doth abide with them. How in this caſe ſhall other Churches know with which of theſe Societies they may and ought to hold communi-

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on, unleſs they may and ought to examine and conſider the cauſes of the Diſſention between them? And they may juſtly, and ought to withhold communion from that party of them which ſhall refuſe to tender their caſe unto ſuch conſideration.

3. On the part of the Perſons ſuppoſed to be injured; and that either for their reſtoration, or their conviction and humiliation. For,

1. If they are innocent, it is meet that they ſhould be heard, as the *Iſraelites heard the Reubenites*, and neceſſary that they ſhould be reſtored.

Now it being ſuppoſed that the Church which hath rejected them, will not reſcind their own Act without new light and evidence, which for many reaſons is not like to ſpring from among themſelves; this is the only way left for that neceſſary relief, which the Lord Chriſt requires to be given. For what is our duty towards a Perſon repenting in reference to his reſtauration, is certainly our duty towards a Perſon who hath not ſinned, when his innocency ſhall be diſcovered.

2. For their conviction and humiliation if they be found offenders. Whilſt they ſee not the right and regularity of the Churches proceedings with them; whilſt they are able to juſtifie themſelves in their own Conſciences, and their hearts condemn them not, it is not to

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be expected that the Sentence of Excommunication, which works only by the means of Mens light and conviction, will have its effect upon them. But when there shall be the concurrence of many Churches, in the approbation of the Censure inflicted on them, which probably will be accompanied with a contribution of new Light and Conviction, it is a most useful means to bring them to Humiliation and Repentance. It was an aggravation of the Censure inflicted on the incestuous *Corinthian*, that it was given out against him by *many*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. that is, by the *common consent* of the Church; and it will add thereunto when the Censure shall be confirmed and approved by the concurrent advice of many Churches.

Corolary.

The Lord Christ having provided all things necessary for the Peace and Edification of his Church; in all things that are evidently of that importance, his Mind and Will is diligently to be inquired after.

Fourthly, This whole Order and Practice is grounded on especial warrant and approbation, recorded *Acts* 15. Concerning which we may observe,

1. That the occasion there mentioned, fell out in the Providence of God, and the Practice upon it was guided by the Holy Ghost,

that it might be an Example and Rule for the Churches of Christ, in cases of a like concernment unto them in all Ages, and so hath the force and warranty of an Institution; as it was in the case that gave occasion unto *Deacons*, *Acts* 4. A matter of fact wherein was some disorder, rectified by a practice answering the necessity of the Churches, became an Institution for Order in all future Ages.

2. That in that *Synod*, things were not determined by immediate Inspiration, but the Truth was searched out, and the Mind of the Holy Ghost searched into, by Reasonings, Arguings, and the consideration of Scripture-Testimonies, whereby they were guided in the Conclusion and Determination.

3. That the Institution and Rule given, is not in its exercise to be confined to that particular Case and Instance there mentioned; (which to do would overthrow many other Rules and Observations which we admit) but it is to be extended in proportion and parity of Reason, unto all Cases of an alike nature. For the Reason of any Law is the Rule of its Interpretation; and so it is of any Institution. That that which gives offence and trouble unto any Church; that wherein many Churches are concerned; that which in any Church hinders Edification, and disturbs the faith or peace of any of the Members of them, whether it be in Do-

Doctrine or Practice, that is not, or cannot be composed in any one Church, should be considered, advised upon, and determined by more Churches holding communion together, and meetings for that purpose by their Messengers, is the sense, meaning, design and importance of this Institution.

Corolary.

To deny an Institution of so great necessity to the Peace and Edification of the Churches, will give great Countenance unto Men, who supposing such defects, are ready to supply them with their own Inventions.

Lastly, The Order asserted is confirmed by the Practice of the first Churches after the decease of the Apostles; for when the *Church of Corinth* had by an undue exercise of Discipline, deposed some of their *Elders*; the *Church of Rome* taking cognizance of it, wrote unto them, reproving their Rashness, and advised their Restoration. And when the Church of *Antioch* was afterward troubled with the Pride and false Opinions of *Paulus Samosatenus*, the neighbouring Bishops or Elders came unto the Church, and joyned their consent in his deposition.

Some things are or may be *objected* unto this course of proceeding amongst the Churches of Christ, which shall therefore briefly be considered and answered.

Object. 1. *This way of proceeding will abridg the Liberty, and destroy the priviledges of particular Churches, which ought to be carefully preserved as the ground and foundation of the whole superstruction of Church-Order.*

Answ. 1. Particular Churches have certainly no Liberties or Priviledges that are inconsistent with, and do contradict either the Light of Nature, Moral Equity, General Rules of the Scripture, or the reasons and ends of all Institutions, and of the Edification of the whole Body of Christ. And on these, as hath been declared, is this way and course of proceeding grounded.

Secondly, Other *Churches* taking care about their own concernments and duty, according to the Will and Appointment of Christ, namely, in considering whom they receive into, and whom they are to deny communion unto, with the causes thereof, do not, nor can truly abridg the Liberties or Priviledges of any Church whatever. For the *duty of many Churches* will never interfere with the due Liberty of any one.

And this is all upon the matter that they do in this case; which must be granted them, unless we shall say that the actings of one Church, and those it may be irregular, shall not only abridg all other Churches of their Liberty, but hinder them also from performing their duty.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I do not ſee how Counſel and Advice can abridg the Liberty of any Church or Perſon. Certainly to guide, direct and aſſiſt any in the acting of their Liberty, is not to abridg it; but rather to ſtrengthen it. For Liberty acted not according to Rule, is licentiouſneſs. A Man in the uſe of his Liberty may be going to do himſelf ſome notable injury; he that ſhall ſtop him by counſel and perſwaſion, with the prevalency and authority of Reaſon, doth not take away his Liberty, but guide him aright in the uſe of it.

Fourthly, Wherein is the *Abridgment* pretended? Is a Church by this means hindred from the free uſe and acting of its own Judgment, in *taking in* what Members it ſeems good: In *watching* over them according to the Rule, in admoniſhing, reproving, or caſting them out, if they find juſt and ſufficient cauſe ſo to do? To hinder, or obſtruct a Church in any of theſe acts or actings by any authority, ſentence, or determination, by any act or acts whatever, is utterly diſclaimed; ſo that this is but a Pretence.

Fifthly, When a caſe hath difficulty in it, and ſuch moſtly, if not univerſally have all caſes wherein there will be found the leaſt appearance of a grievance in the execution of Cenſures, or pretence for ſeeking redreſs; a Church hath not liberty, hath no priviledg

to ſecure it from *previous ſeeking the advice* of other Churches, which is their Duty by many Rules of Scripture. We muſt not pretend unbounded Liberty againſt known Duty. And as a Church doth not ſeek previous advice from other Churches, that they may obtain *power* to execute their Cenſures which they have in themſelves; no more doth this *following advice* any way cut them ſhort in the uſe or execution of their power, but only direct them. And if a Church have not this liberty by Rule before Cenſure in difficult caſes, as it hath not, no more hath it after a Cenſure, whereby the neceſſity of advice and counſel may be encreaſed.

Second Objection. *This way of proceeding will erect a Juriſdiction or Judicature in ſome Churches over others, which is not to be allowed.* So ſome have ſpoken, who have not, it may be, duly weighed either what *Juriſdiction* properly ſo called is, or how great an evil it is to caſt a reproach upon the right ways of the Lord. In anſwer, I ſay,

Firſt, Excommunication it ſelf, what ever Men may ſuppoſe, is no proper act of Juriſdiction. For Juriſdiction in any ſenſe is an *adjunct of Office:* And the acts of it are acts of Office and Power. But ſo is not Excommunication. For it is not an authoritative act of the Officers of the Church, but a judicial Sen-

Sentence of the whole Church. Now the whole Church is not in Office. *The whole Body is not an Eye.* What is done then by it, is no act of Office-power, but a declaration of a Judgment according to especial Institution. And if *Excommunication* it self may be exercised without any Jurisdiction; surely that *Exercise* may be consulted and advised about without any pretence thereunto.

Secondly, To constitute a Jurisdiction, it is required that there be, *First*, An Office-power stated in them that claim it; and a Duty in others on the same account to submit unto them. *Secondly*, An *Authoritative* acting by virtue of that Office-power, with an Obligation from that Authority formally considered, unto Obedience; with sundry other things which in this matter are utterly disclaimed.

Thirdly, A right understanding of the true state of the Question, of what is granted, and what asserted in this matter, will with them that *love peace and truth*, fully obviate such Objections as these. For,

First, It is granted that all Church-power and authority for the administration of all the Ordinances and Institutions of the Gospel, is intrusted with a particular Congregation.

Secondly, That there is no *Judicature*, no Church-Assembly vested with Church-power and authority without, above, or beyond a

particular Church, that ſhould either contribute authority unto ſuch a Church for its actings or authoritatively controul it in its actings, to order or change its proceeding in any thing, as by virtue of any authority received unto that purpoſe.

Thirdly, That in caſe any Perſon be not ſatisfied with the adminiſtration of the Church whereof he is a Member, but finds himſelf agrieved thereby, he cannot appeal unto any Church or Churches, or Aſſemblies of Churches, as having power or authority to revoke, or diſanul the ſentence or act of the Church wherewith he is offended; either in pretence that the Church without their concurrence and conſent, had not power to paſs any ſuch act, or that they have authority to controul their acts, or can on any account authoritatively interpoſe in their adminiſtrations.

Fourthly, It is then granted, that the power of Excommunication in the preceding acts unto it, and full execution of it, is placed in a particular Congregation, without reſpect unto any ſuperiour Authority, but that of Chriſt and his Word.

Theſe things are acknowledged; but that it ſhould hence follow, that in caſe of ſuppoſed *mal-adminiſtration* of Ordinances, and the complaint of Perſons pretending to be injured thereby, other Churches are not by virtue of

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Scripture-Rules, Inſtitution of our Lord Jeſus, warrant of the Light of Nature, on their communion and common intereſt, to inquire into the matter, and take cognizance of it, that no offence be given or taken, that they may know how to diſcharge aright their duty towards both the Church and the Perſons agrieved, and give their advice in the common concernment of all the Churches, there is no pretence to ſurmiſe. And for a Church to ſay, that becauſe they have power to do what they do, they will therefore in ſuch things neither deſire advice, nor take advice, nor hearken unto counſel, nor give account of their proceeding to them that are or may be offended, or that require an account of them, is ſcarce agreeable to the Spirit of Chriſt, or Rule of his Word.

Third Objection, *This is the way to fruſtrate the ſentence of Excommunication, and to prevent the due efficacy of it upon Perſons cenſured; yea, to harden them in their ſin and offence.*

Anſwer, Firſt, Concerning whom are theſe things feared? Were the advice mentioned, and the counſel to be had and given to be among Heathens, enemies of the Church, or of the ways of Chriſt, or of the eſpecial way and order of Church-Fellowſhip, which in this Diſcourſe is ſuppoſed, ſuch events might be feared. But to pretend to fear, that other Churches

Churches of Chriſt walking in the ſame order and communion with our ſelves, and whom we ought to look on in all things as like-minded with our ſelves, as to their aim at the glory of God, and edification of the Church, ſhould by their counſel and advice fruſtrate the end of any Ordinance of Chriſt, is a ſurmiſe that ought not to be indulged unto: Yea, we have herein cauſe to admire the Wiſdom, and bleſs the care of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath provided this help for us to ſtrengthen and confirm us in the ways of Truth and Righteouſneſs, or to direct us where we are or may be miſtaken.

Secondly, Where Excommunication is not adminiſtred but in a due manner, and for juſt cauſes, there will appear little trouble or difficulty in this matter. Let the cauſe or matter of it, be as it ought to be, ſuch a ſin or ſins, as the mind or conſcience of a Believer, of an enlightned Perſon free from open prejudices, will at firſt view condemn in himſelf and others, and this, or theſe ſins, perſiſted in after due admonition; and there will indeed be left no pretence of grievance or complaint in thoſe that are cenſured. But if it be adminiſtred in dubious caſes, we ſhall find that this *way of counſel* is ſo far from being an obſtruction of its efficacy, as that it is the only means to render it effectual.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, No Man will complain or addreſs himſelf unto the relief declared, if he be convinced in his conſcience that he is not injured, but that he is indeed guilty of the crimes charged on him, and that by Scripture-Rule they are ſuch as deſerve that cenſure. In this caſe, no Man will be ſo fooliſh or obſtinate as to ſeek for relief. And if he ſhould do ſo, he can poſſibly expect nothing, but to have his Bonds made ſtrong. But now ſuppoſe that a Perſon be not ſo convinced, neither before nor after Sentence denounced againſt him, but looks on himſelf as Innocent and Injured, either in part, or in whole, in matter or manner of proceeding, what effect can be expected of his Excommunication? We are deceived, if we look that this Ordinance ſhould have any effect upon Men, but by the conviction of their minds and conſciences. It worketh *Doctrinally* only, though peculiarly by virtue of eſpecial Inſtitution. And in this caſe it is evident how this way may farther, and that it cannot poſſibly obſtruct the effects of this Cenſure, as was in part before declared.

Fourthly, The addreſs being but once to be made, this is the only way to bind the guilty Perſon, and that without delay, and to give him a ſenſe of his ſin; which it is ſuppoſed that before he had not.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, It is our duty not to caſt even Perſons that are excommunicate under new temptations. Now he that is agrieved with the ſentence denounced againſt him, and ſuppoſeth himſelf injured (which whilſt he doth ſo, he cannot be humbled for his ſin) if he ſuppoſeth he hath no way of relief left unto him; that is, that his caſe can no more come under *advice* or counſel; he will be expoſed unto temptations to irregular ways, and ſo to caſt off the yoke which he ſuppoſeth grievous and injurious.

Object. 4. *The pattern urged for this courſe of proceeding*, Acts 15. *concerneth only Doctrines, and not the adminiſtration of Cenſures, which was not then nor there in queſtion:* And therefore in the like caſe only, may the like courſe be taken.

Anſw. The way of mutual counſel and advice amongſt Churches pleaded for, is not built only upon that Inſtance and Example, as hath before been evinced.

There are many more grounds of it, reaſons for it, and directions about it, than what are, or can be compriſed in any one particular Inſtance.

Secondly, There is frequently, if not always, ſome *Doctrinal miſtake* in the bottom of all *maladminiſtration*. For whereas the nature of the ſin proceeded againſt, and the rule proceeded by,

by, ought in the first place to be Doctrinally and Dogmatically stated, here usually is the beginning of the mistake and error of any Church. This therefore falls confessedly under that Example of *Acts* 15.

Thirdly, Though that Assembly made a Doctrinal determination of the things in difference, yet the formal reason of the consideration of those things was the offence that was given, and that the Churches were troubled. So that the pattern is to be extended unto all things whereby the peace of the Church is disturbed.

Fourthly, Mal-administration may tend to the subversion of the Church, and the ruine of the souls of Men, no less than false Doctrines. As suppose a Church should admit known *Arrians* or *Socinians* into their society, supposing they have liberty so to do, may not other Churches both consider the fact, and unless they alter their proceeding, withhold communion from them? Instances innumerable of the same kind may be given.

Fifth Object. *Churches have the sole power of admitting Members into their Society; by virtue of which admission, they are not only received into a participation of the Priviledges of the Church in that particular Society, whereof they are Members; but also into the Communion of all other Churches of Christ. Now this is daily practised by*

by Churches without any farther inſpection into their actions by others. Thoſe admitted, are received upon their teſtimony in their admiſſion. And why ſhall not Churches have the ſame truſt repoſed in them as to the excluſion of any Members from them, and expect that their teſtimony alone in the fact, ſhould ſatisfie for their excluſion from all other Churches, and their Communion?

Anſw. Firſt, The caſes indeed are *parallel*, and the power of every Church is no leſs for the Excluſion of any of their Members, than for their Admiſſion. Nor ought their teſtimony to be of leſs weight in the one, than in the other.

Secondly, Ordinarily, and where there is no ground of farther conſideration, the actings of a Church of Chriſt in both theſe caſes, are, and ought to be granted, and taken to be according unto rule; ſo that other Churches do acquieſce as to their concernments in the Judgment of all the ſeveral Churches of their communion.

Thirdly, There may be *miſtakes in Admiſſions*, as well as in the Excluſion of Members. And ſome there are who do very much ſcruple compleat communion with many Churches, principally upon this account, that they proceed not on right grounds in their admiſſion of Members; and ſuch cannot but grant that on occaſion the grounds of their own Admiſſions may and ought to be queſtioned and examined.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, No Church hath ſuch an abſolute power in the admiſſion of Members, but that in caſes of difficulty, and ſuch as may in their determination one way or other give offence, they are bound to ſeek, and to take the advice of other Churches with whom they hold communion.

Fifthly, Suppoſe it be reported or intimated by any of the ways that were before mentioned, that a Church in communion with others, hath admitted into their Society an *Arrian*, or *Socinian*, a Seducer, or a Perſon of a flagitious life, given to corrupt the manners of others; Shall not the other Churches of the ſame communion, to whom the matter is ſo reported, or declared, and who are offended thereat, require an account of the Churches proceeding therein, to know whether it be as it is reported or no? And is not that Church ſo repreſented or reported of, obliged to give a full and punctual account of their proceedings, and to receive advice thereupon? Let any conſider the Inſtances before given, the nature of the thing it ſelf, the rule of the Scripture in ſuch caſes, and determine. The caſe is directly the ſame as to Excommunication.

But if any Man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch Cuſtome, neither the Churches of God, 1 Cor. 11. 16.

FINIS.